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Irving Kristol

The Shadow of the Marquis

Notes on Some Possibly Related Matters

"PARIS, Dec. 16—*The Marquis de Sade, who died in 1814, was yesterday the subject of a case in Paris's court of summary jurisdiction. The case takes the form of a public prosecution, under the charge of an outrage to morality, of a publisher who has been producing the works of Sade in a limited edition.*

"*Maître Garçon, an Academician and a famous figure at the French Bar, defended the publisher, who, he pointed out, could, if he so desired, have brought out a clandestine edition. The real defence, however, was of Sade himself. Me. Garçon called as witness M. Jean Paulhan, the editor of the* Nouvelle Nouvelle Revue Française, *who maintained that nearly all the nineteenth-century writers had been influenced by Sade. . . . Sade was a great writer and philosopher. . . .*

"*The president of the court asked M. Paulhan whether he did not think Sade was dangerous. M. Paulhan agreed, and said that he had known a young girl who had gone to a convent after reading Sade. . . .*

"*In written evidence, M. Jean Cocteau said that Sade was a moralist in his own way. . . .*"

—*Times*, December 17th, 1956

•

IT IS not likely that any court of law, reading Sade's gleeful and precise account of the sexual pleasures to be derived from the raping and disembowelling of pregnant women, will be impressed with either his morals or his philosophy. Nor will they be enchanted by him as a writer; as Albert Camus has remarked, if Sade is admired today, it is for reasons that have nothing to do with literature. He had his moments, of course; as when he provided one of his female characters with a clitoris so huge she could behave sexually as a male—not many writers could have had such an original idea. But it is not for this rich vein of fantasy that he is so dear to French intellectuals. Nor even because his high regard for kleptomania—the very suggestion of theft could provoke his heroes to orgasm—oddly parallels their excitement before the Marxist prescription of expropriating the expropriators. Rather, he is revered as one who "must be given a place in the great family of those who want to cut through the 'banality of everyday life' to a truth which is immanent in this world" (Simone de Beauvoir); or as—to quote a contemporary admirer, William Blake—the author of "a writing prophetic." (It might be noted in passing that Blake in English, as Sade in French, is the most *outrageous* writer of the past two centuries. Fortunately for Blake's place in the university curriculum, he clothed his thoughts in a dark mythology instead of a bold pornography. A young man has to be very studious to be corrupted by him.)

•

"IT WOULD have been more conformable to goodness, reason, and equity if only stones and plants had been created, rather than men

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whose conduct could draw upon themselves endless punishments."

And: "[Evil] is an eternal and imperishable being that existed before the world, a monstrous and execrable being, for only such could create so bizarre a world. . . ."

Thus Sade. The French critic Pierre Klossowski, in his brilliant little book *Sade, Mon Prochain* (how French a title, that!), has pointed out the extent to which these basic ideas, and the general movement of Sade's thought, have affinities with the various gnostic-Manichean heresies that have continually undermined and infiltrated the official "Christian" civilisation of the West. Despite his militant atheism and the crude materialism of his rhetoric, Sade believes, along with them, that Nature, in imposing her harsh necessities and painful limitations on human existence, must be the work of Satan not of God; that the only possible resistance to the demonic creator of this world is a form of non-resistance; that sin must be "used up" by the practice of all the crimes; that only in the very depths of sin, and particularly in those rites that are at once blasphemous and orgiastic, can one have a perception of the original purity which preceded creation.

•

Departing from the "progressive" theme, *j'existe pour le libre développement du moi*, one sooner or later arrives at the gnostic theme, *j'existe pour n'exister point.*

•

According to Freud, "something in the nature of the sexual instinct itself is unfavourable to the achievement of absolute gratification." And when it is the absolute that is insisted upon, Eros is transformed into Thanatos, the lust for life becomes identical with the lust for death.

•

L'Histoire d'O is a pornographic novel published in Paris last year by "Pauline Réage" (a pseudonym). I use the word "pornographic" with considerable hesitation, since it aims at art, not mere titillation. It is a Gothic tale of a woman, O, who, at the instigation of her lover, becomes the slave of a freemasonry of sadists, and who finds in the indignities perpetrated upon her a perfect contentment. The book remains in a state of pornography for the same reason that some religions remain in a state of heresy: the world simply refuses to come to an end at the climatic moment, and sexual hysteria like religious hysteria finally achieves only a frenzied monotony—for outsiders at least. Nevertheless, it is a spiritual document of some significance. The significance is underlined by M. Jean Paulhan in his preface, to which he has given the title "Of Happiness in Slavery," and is summed up in the anecdote with which he opens: in the Barbados, in 1838, a mob of recently-freed slaves rose in rebellion, demanding the reinstitution of slavery; when their former master rejected this demand, they massacred him and his family.

•

The Marquis de Sade was an eloquent opponent of the death penalty, which he regarded as inhumane. At the same time, he defended infanticide, rape, and allied activities. One suspects that the attitude of so many French intellectuals toward Sade has some connection with their attitude toward Communism. In both cases, they find themselves apologising for hideous cruelty as being, in some dialectical way, liberating. (As far back as 1934, an English book on Sade said benevolently of Communism that it was a kind of "constructive sadism.") For them, too, the celebration of absolute freedom implies a submission to absolute servitude; the absolute liberation of the flesh, its savage mortification.

•

"The last of the Cathars" is how a French literary critic recently designated M. Jean-Paul Sartre. The Church may have suppressed the Albigensian heresy with fire and sword, but that heresy has become the unofficial religion of the Paris intelligentsia. When Mlle. de Beauvoir says of Sade that, for him, "evil is an absolute . . . and there is only one way of

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asserting oneself in the face of it: to assent to it," she suddenly throws a beam of light on that otherwise inexplicable tendency among French writers simultaneously to extol the "religion of humanity" and to melt complaisantly in the face of the ruthlessly inhuman.

In Paris, one speaks of *la Révolution*, quite simply, with that *frisson* which only the Holy can evoke—the Holy that is at once sacred and profane, for it is the source of both. And for the past 175 years there have been groups of young men in Paris—painters, poets, romantics—who felt themselves the conscious heirs to a messianism generated by *la Révolution*, whose *jeux sacrés* are a desperate and gallant surrender to the ruin of time, who are in a perpetual agony of frustration because they can produce nothing but literature. In what other city could there have been set up a "Collège de Sociologie Sacrée," such as that gifted writer Georges Bataille founded in the 1930's to carry on The Tradition of Sade, Lautréamont, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Nietzsche?

*

"The rehabilitation of matter": this was one of the key points in the Saint-Simonian programme which, echoing Sade's "justice is the divinity of all the passions," openly proclaimed a "revolt of the flesh." The Saint-Simonians expected the advent of a Woman Messiah in 1833. So far as we know, she did not arrive; but Marx did, standing Hegel on his head, making the history of the World Spirit the history of flesh-and-blood, and its ultimate perfection a human promise.

*

Everybody knows that the categories of "Left" and "Right" derive from the accidental seating arrangements in the French Revolutionary Assembly. But it is one of those accidents that sets one to wondering. In traditional cabbalistic mythology, left and right in the universe stood in relation to one another as female principle to the male, the principle of flux to the principle of order. Why, after all, did those French radical deputies choose to sit on the left? Was it completely unrelated to the dispossession of *le père roi* in favour of *la mère patrie*? And why has the vocabulary of Western politics persisted in revolving about these terms of Left and Right?

There is something about the Left-Right polarity that seems to lie close to the very essence of modernity. And it is the Left that creates this polarity, for it is the dynamic partner, maternal and "materialistic" in its solicitude for human pleasures, disdainful of authority and custom, impetuous and salvation-seeking. Its ideal, so far as one can state it baldly, is for a harmonious society based on the free play of the passions. It is for a *happy* world. "From the worm to the eagle, we were not born to be wise but to be happy," wrote La Mettrie, Sade's mentor and the author of *L'Homme Machine*.

*

This ideal does not sound strange to us, but it would have bewildered someone born in the 18th century. The concept of a happy man he could comprehend from his reading of the philosophers (practically all of them still celibate, by the way). A happy world he could know of too, from his religious instruction—as something that existed before the Fall and which would reappear after the Last Judgment. But a happy world *in the here and now*—this he would immediately have recognised as an apocalyptic extravagance, a lapse into "enthusiasm," a "hastening of the end," with consequences bloody and chaotic.

The belief that happiness could be a *political* goal was first announced by the French Revolution, as Saint-Just boasted, at the height of the Terror.

*

Geoffrey Gorer is doubtless correct in his statement that Sade was, if anything, more a religious than a sexual maniac. And not only Sade; and not only sex. . . . Shortly after the revolutions of 1848, Kierkegaard entered a prediction in his journal: "Everything that passes for politics today, will be unmasked as religion tomorrow." But he was, in this, a bit optimistic: the unmasking has hardly begun.

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C. Day Lewis

Moods of Love

I

THE melting poles, the tongues that play at lightning,
All that gross hurricane hatched from a sigh—
These are the climax to his sure routine.
But first, a glance coins gold in the air, doves issue
From clasped hands, knots no one saw tied are tightening;
The card you chose, or were made to, wondrously
Turns up here there and anywhere like a djinn,
And borrowed time vanishes to amaze you.

Admire the 'fluence of this conjuring
As once again he runs the gamut through
Of tricks you can neither fathom nor resist,
Though well you know the old Illusionist
Employs for his whole repertoire only two
Simple properties—a rod, a ring.

II

THINK of his transformations: thirsty babe,
Secret companion, devil, confidante,
Lapdog and sphinx—each hides that king whose orb
Is the whole earth grasped in a bare "I want."
Redder the rose for him, sadder the fall,
Who swells a trivial word into a portent,
Turns dust to diamond, shows the bantam tall,
The giant weak: nevertheless, most potent
When he comes back insidious and subdued
As an old jailbird begging one more chance.
Whether you trust him then, or look askance,
Or slam your door, at least don't act the prude:
He's what you've made of him: plausible, lewd
Or tough, he's your flesh—was a pure child once.

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III

"Oh shelter me from the invisible rain
Corrodes my flesh piecemeal! Oh take me in—
I'll be your god, your man, your mannikin!"
Cry the gaunt lecher and the ignorant swain.

Dipped in eternity now, they find nowhere
A flaw in the magic circle of their embracing:
Two are reborn as one: where all is passing
They dream a now for ever and set fair.

Reborn! The very word is like a bell.
From the warm trance, the virgin arms awoken,
Each turns to his sole self. Out of the shell
They step, unchanged. Only a spell is broken.

Though there's no cure, no making whole, no fusion,
Live while you can the merciful illusion.

IV

See, at a turn of her wrist, paradise open;
Dote, lover, upon a turquoise vein;
Feel how the blood flowers and the nerves go lilting
Like butterflies through an immortal blue.
This is creation morning. What could happen
But miracles here? The god you entertain,
The pure legend you breathe, no desert silting
Over your garden ever makes untrue.

New-seen, first-named, your own to hurt and heal,
This commonplace of skin, bone, habit, sense
Is now a place that never was before.
Lose and possess yourself therein: adore
The ideal clay, the carnal innocence.
Where all's miraculous, all is most real.

V

Inert, blanched, naked, at the gale's last gasp
Out of their drowning bliss flung high and dry
Above the undertow, the breakers' rasp,
With shells and weed and shining wrack they lie.
Or, as an isle asleep with its reflection
Upon the absolute calm, each answers each
In the twin trance of an unflawed affection
That shows the substance clear, the dream in reach.

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By one arched, hollowing, toppling wave uptossed
Together on the gentle dunes, they know
A world more lucid for lust's afterglow,
Where, fondly separate, blind passion fused
To a reflective glass, each holds in trust
The other's peace, and finds his real self so.

VI

THE dance, the plumage, all that flaunting day
Of blood's clairvoyance and enchanter's wit
Making trite things unique—you reckon it
Tells more than brute necessity at play?

Unwise. Another tedious, piteous woman
Was Helen, got by heart. Can you adore
The human animal's ecstasy, yet ignore
The ground and primitive logic of being human?—

Deplore that closest viewed is clearliest changing,
And least enduring is the most enthralling?
That love breeds habit, habit brings estranging?
That highest flown means most abysmal falling?

When the flushed hour goes down, what residue
From its broad-glittering flood remains to you?

VII

SHELLS, weed, discoloured wrack—a spring tide's litter
Dully recalling its lost element,
And one you live with, quarrelsome or complying,
Are all that's left of Aphrodite's birth.
Gone is the power she gave you to delight her,
The period of grace, so quickly spent,
When the day's walk was a white dream of flying,
Earth a far cry, she a sufficient earth.

Whether long use has now choked your desire
With its own clinker, or, abruptly parted
At love's high noon, incredulous you have stood
Suffering her absence like a loss of blood
Week after week, still, by the god deserted,
You worship relics of the sacred fire.

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VIII

BEWARE! Such idolising can divorce
Body and mind: the foam-bright fiction drains
Purpose away and sings you from your course.
Better a brutal twitching of the reins
And off, than this devouring pious whore
Who in a soft regret will twine you fast
Where thigh-bones mope along the tainted shore
And crazed beachcombers pick over their past.
Love is the venturing on: think—as you fare
Among strange islands, each a phantasy
Of home, giving your strength to what must be
Found and new-found through doubt, mirage, despair—
Weaving, unweaving her true self somewhere
Deep in your heart, grows a Penelope.

IX

IF love means exploration—the divine
Growth of a new discoverer first conceived
In flesh, only the stranger can be loved:
Familiar loving grooves its own decline.

If change alone is true—the ever-shifting
Base of each real or illusive show,
Inconstancy's a law: the you that now
Loves her, to otherness is blindly drifting.

But chance and fretting time and your love change her
Subtly from year to year, from known to new:
So she will always be the elusive stranger,
If you can hold her present self in view.

Find here, in constant change, faithful perceiving,
The paradox and mode of all true loving.

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Kathryn Feuer

Russia's Young Intellectuals

or some of them, anyway

IN LENINGRAD I met a friend from the United States. We had attended the same college and done Russian studies at the same university; in our month in the U.S.S.R. we had followed very similar itineraries—we could agree on almost nothing which we had seen. Were the people better dressed in Leningrad or in Kiev; was the shashlik delicious or atrocious, had it rained yesterday or was it fine? On such apparently straightforward, non-ideological shoals we foundered every time. As we sat silent, each lost in hopeless chagrin, there arose before my sight a terrible vision. We were only two of several thousand experts, semi-experts, pseudo-experts, and soon-to-be experts, serving out our thirty days with Intourist. The time was not far when we would all return—one to his lecture platform, one to his typewriter—and the impending babel of impressions, interpretations, and observations, of direct quotations, indirect quotations, misquotations, of predictions, dire and hedging, of platitudes, straight and paradoxical—it was a vision truly tragic, with pity for readers everywhere, and despair for ragged Truth.

This is the true *caveat*. The fact that when I refer below to a young chemist in Kiev I may be thinking of an art-historian in Moscow is a simpler affair. The people worth quoting are those who spoke frankly; editors require that they be better identified than as A and B; decency requires that their real identity be masked. But the reader should be aware that this account of young Soviet intellectuals is based on conversations with not more than a couple of dozen people, all of whom I met by chance, several of whom I came to know well and saw rather frequently. They are a small minority of the Soviet citizens whom I encountered; they differed from the others in the superior quality and breadth of their intelligence. They cannot be said to speak for Soviet man, nor even for the educated classes; very likely they represent no one but themselves.

The term "intelligentsia" is used very freely in the Soviet Union. In general it denotes those who earn their living without manual labour; its aura is of prestige and material comfort. A Neanderthal man, if he works with pen and paper, is an *intelligent*. There seems to be no term for "intellectual" as we use the word. But language, whatever its powers, does not define social reality, and while there may be no name to call them by, intellectuals, in the truest sense, do exist in the Soviet Union. (The tone of this assertion is not meant to be condescending. Since the U.S.S.R. is the country where, for over twenty-five years, there has been a total effort to create a completely false culture, the appearance of real intellectuals is a real cause for rejoicing. One finds them in likely if unpredictable places—gazing at

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the newly-hung Matisses in the Hermitage, sprawled on the grass, engaged in earnest conversation, on the quad of Shevchenko University in Kiev (sitting on the grass is rather non-K(*ulturny*),* and so is a sign of a free spirit among university students). One finds them working in the government literary museums, where between deliveries of set guide talks on Tolstoy or Lomonosov they retire to their untidy, book-lined offices to work on dissertations which they have scant hope of publishing. One finds them at the "Aurora," on Nevskii Prospect in Leningrad, where old movies are shown. Very much like the audiences at New York's Museum of Modern Art, they are often hard put to explain what's distinctively good about many of these pictures, but they find in them a spontaneity, an occasional flash of human authenticity as against the slick soap-operas in Magicolor.

But mostly, of course, they are the library habitués. Anyone who knows the New York Public Library or the Reading Room of the British Museum, is immediately at home in the Lenin Library in Moscow, or the Saltykov-Shchedrin in Leningrad. One rainy night in Leningrad the library smokers were huddled together on the steps near the door. A group of engineering students (they have the largest reading room in the library) were discussing something which I wouldn't have understood even in English; the voices dropped; I felt myself an object of scrutiny and tried to look as approachable as possible. Finally, a small, bright-eyed, blond young man, who seemed to laugh more than the others, turned to me. "I hope you're enjoying our splendid summer weather"—he made a gesture of mock hospitality which took in the grey rain, the grey sky, the pedestrians being blown along by a cutting November-like wind. I replied that it went well with the Leningrad landscape; "I *thought* you were a tourist," he said. "From what country?"

America!—the impassivity of his friends was noticeably deepened, but Andrey, as his name turned out to be, was entranced. "We greatly enjoyed your Isaac Stern when he was here," he said rather formally. "Is he your best violinist?" Hedging this one, I replied that *we* had greatly enjoyed Oistrakh, but he had already rushed on.

"What a sad thing that Einstein died. He was a real genius. Did you know him?" I had to confess that I had not, but I remarked that I was happy to hear him say that, because I understood that Einstein's relativity theory had long been considered bourgeois idealism in the Soviet Union. "We greatly respect Einstein," he said. "Even these babies"—he turned to his companions, glum and serious as bureaucrats, "you've heard of Einstein, haven't you?" They nodded shyly, shuffling from one foot to the other. "They're worried. It's only the second day of their second year at the Institute and they want to get back to their books."

He offered me a long-on-cardboard, short-on-tobacco *papirosa* and the others seized the opportunity to dissolve back into the library.

"And are you also a second-year student at the Institute?" I asked. This was tremendously funny; he was a physicist at the Academy of Sciences; one of the students was his brother, "the stupid one of the family"; he had come to the library to read French poetry. His enthusiasm at meeting an American was boundless; he wanted all sorts of information about wages and prices and taxes; finally we began to walk around the park that is next to the library; under the imposing ægis of Katherine the Second ("Ekaterina Secunda," I once heard a hard-pressed guide explain to a group of Italian tourists) we returned to the question of Einstein.

"It's true," Andrey said, referring to his brother and his friends; "they've heard all about Einstein. After all, he was a friend of peace." His tone managed to suggest scornful quotation marks round this phrase; then, suddenly aggressive, he added, "I believe he was persecuted for this in America." I tried to explain the complex compound of reasoned criticism and of reverence, of anti-intellectual

* *Kulturny* and *nekulturny* (uncultured) are the new judgment terms of Soviet snobbery; one starts by inquiring about basic philosophies, and one learns that "it is only the uncultured who wear pyjamas on the street."

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hostility and superstitious awe which was Einstein's reputation in America, but this didn't really concern him very seriously. "A wonderful mind, a miraculous mind," he said, and I raised again the long Soviet rejection of the theory of relativity.

Andrey said that most physicists had tacitly accepted the greater part of Einstein's work, "though of course, like your people, we were surprised by the unified field theory." (It took me a little time to understand what he was talking about here, and he had the courtesy to be impatient with my non-comprehension, which was terribly refreshing after numerous encounters with good-hearted but slow-witted citizens who delivered themselves of newspaper catchwords with clear enunciation and who praised one's bad Russian inordinately, as if encouraging an idiot child.) "There were some, of course, who genuinely rejected relativity." When I nodded in agreement, he added, "honestly, if very conveniently," with the ironic humour which informed all of his conversation.

It was extremely disappointing that I could answer none of his questions about American mathematics and physics, which he followed by reading abstracts. The only American mathematician I'd ever heard of was Tom Lehrer, and the Lobachevsky song ("Plagiarise! But always call it research") delighted him so much that he stood under a dripping tree to take down my very crude translation into a pocket notebook.

A few days later I went as a guest to Andrey's apartment. He lived well, by Soviet standards, in four rather crowded rooms, with his parents, whom I didn't meet, and their servant girl, to whom I was gravely introduced. Galya, his very pretty fiancée (a Ukrainian from the Caucasus, she told me rather sharply, when I asked her if she were Russian) was also there. She was interested in my clothes and giggled unashamedly at my Russian; "Mayakovsky!" she would shout whenever I used a word which didn't exist, and Andrey would shush her, insisting, "But it's very interesting." He had been making calculations based on what I had told him about American prices and wages. What impressed him most was that one wage-earner could support a family, leaving the wife free to devote all her time to the care of her house and children. Galya was scornful of wives who did not work—they are a favourite target for official satire in the U.S.S.R. these days. I remarked that of course we had our share of such women, but that the average housewife worked sufficiently hard, since she was not likely to have any domestic help. Galya was a socialist, a rare and charming political persuasion in the Soviet Union, and did not like to believe me when I told her that I thought that many more people had servants in the U.S.S.R. than in the U.S.A. Finally Andrey remarked, with a trace of impatience, "if she were a capitalist propagandist she would be telling us that all the workers had servants." He was bored with the cost-of-living, and wanted to talk about the Rosenberg case.

I told him of my own reaction; that I thought they had committed acts of espionage, that I considered their punishment cruelly excessive, but that their legal defence had, it seemed to me, subordinated their lives to the political motives of the Communist Party. He was extremely interested in the last point and accepted its probability with the cynical detachment of the scientist who considers all politics venal. Then he remarked, "Our newspapers published a great deal about Urey [that's a first name here; it sounds very funny to call a distinguished scientist 'Juri'] and the others who protested the verdict. I couldn't judge about that since the full trial wasn't published here. But I thought, what a wonderful country, where these scientists feel free to protest. And Oppenheimer, too—he still has his job at the Academy of Sciences, I believe?"

This was too much for Galya; "A wonderful country where they electrocute innocent people," she remarked, and Andrey threw up his hands in affectionate reproach.

"But you people are mistaken in thinking that our science is all stolen from the West," he continued. "Our people are well trained; really, very good. We can solve any technical

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problem, and you know, it's much more convenient to work things out for ourselves than to rely on the latest espionage reports. We can solve our problems," he repeated, "but to formulate the *new* problems—the ones whose existence we don't even dream of—I don't know who will do that. I read poetry to keep my mind alive; our best theoretician is also a musician—but our thinking is too consecutive, too *a priori*. Or," he glanced again at Galya, "maybe I'm just making excuses for myself."

"He wants to be Isaac Newton," Galya remarked, while Andrey glumly stirred his cold tea; "he thinks it's a disgrace because he's thirty, and he hasn't discovered gravity or something."

Andrey was the only scientist I met who spoke so freely; he was also the only one of the intellectuals I encountered who even toyed with the idea of "discovering gravity." Most had ambitions far more limited. While not expecting to find the boarding-school optimism exuded by all Soviet literature, movies, and propaganda, I suppose I had nevertheless been sufficiently influenced to anticipate a greater hopefulness about their personal futures than I found among young Soviet graduate students. Higher education is, after all, the surest key to success and advancement in the U.S.S.R.; for those with an advanced degree Soviet society seems to be markedly mobile. And so it was a surprise to meet so many who were uncertain or unhappy about their future work. I spoke to many young men and women who had graduated in the spring from the University or from an advanced Institute. They were taking the summer off, or, in some cases, working for Intourist; in August, none of them seemed to know what their jobs would be in the fall. "The best days of my life are over; now I must go to work," said one, and he meant it. He had specialised in international affairs, and was, he told me quite proudly, "an expert on America." He asked lots of questions on the coming elections, and the differing positions and histories of the Republicans and the Democrats. "This is very enlightening," he remarked, "because in my major report at the University, I *proved* that there was absolutely no difference between your parties." When we said good-bye, he asked me to send him a book on American history. "Actually, what I am expert in, is denouncing America," he said ruefully, and when, trying to lighten the tone, I suggested that the book would provide him with fresh material, he smiled but shook his head.

"I can't think of any job I could get that would satisfy me," said a really gifted girl who specialised in history of art. "I suppose that for the next few years I'll go on studying." She was in general a rather morose girl, who brightened and was transformed only when she was talking about France. She knew the language, had talked to some French tourists; her literary reference points were Flaubert and Balzac rather than Pushkin and Tolstoy. Like most of the others whom I met, she was more or less resigned that she might never *see* France; "if I ever get abroad" was as optimistic a remark as I heard on the possibility, and this was in a context of bitterness. "If I ever get abroad, perhaps I will learn something of the history of my own country"—so ended a conversation with an economist which had begun with Lenin and moved on to Bukharin, Radek, and Trotsky.

This discouragement about the future was not an expectation of joblessness or disaster; one sees no prospect of an unemployed intelligentsia, whose discontent, in other times and places, has so often been a revolutionary force. It has to do, rather, with the scope and quality of the work which intellectuals will be called upon to do. A young university instructor, talented, ambitious, with a promising career before him, told me: "When I was asked to teach, it was the fulfilment of a dream. Then I started to prepare my lectures —what I must say, occasionally seasoned with what I dared say. I began to see my own ignorance, and this was nothing, compared with the ignorance in which I'd both find, and leave, my students."

Similarly, confinement to the U.S.S.R. is not confinement to prison; many feel restless and restricted, many express a deep longing

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to see Western Europe or the United States, but that's as far as it goes. Certainly it may exist, but I did not encounter any of that desperate desire to escape political persecution or cultural backwardness which has characterised so many Russian emigré intellectuals in the past. One would have to call these young people "responsible"; if they felt themselves captives of their political system, they also appeared to feel involved in their country's future; even the most bitter and scorning shared in the half-defensive, half-prideful patriotism. Perhaps Stalin was wise to keep them shut away; perhaps Khrushchev, in permitting hand-picked boatloads to tour Western Europe, will not satisfy, but only sharpen their reasonable hunger. And this is the closest thing to free travel that they can look forward to; closely guided and expensive as these trips are, they are still a great privilege, granted only to A-plus students in the school of Soviet survival. The majority consider it likely that they will never get abroad.

ON THE basis of published reports as well as my own speculations I had expected to find a wave of optimism based on the relaxation of the cultural and political atmosphere after Stalin's death and especially after Khrushchev's speech. But while everyone to whom I spoke felt that things were "better now," no one expressed confidence that any fundamental changes had taken place. The literary people seemed most cheerful—they spoke rather glibly of "a new period" of "new subjects" and even, which would be more to the point, of a possible "new, experimental magazine." Hemingway is all the rage now, so much so that one must foresee a long succession of novels displaying significant violence on the collective farm and the tight-lipped code of the fishery trust. Olësha and Isaac Babel, after being forbidden for many years, are to be reissued soon; both editions have already been over-subscribed in advance at the bookstores. Sergey, an imaginative young economist working in Moscow, astonished me by remarking that he was almost late for our appointment because he'd been so absorbed in a story by Boris Pilniak. "Has *he* been revived?" I asked; no, not yet; he'd come across a 1927 copy of *Novyi Mir* among his father's books. But Sergey, while generally gloomy about current events, could see no reason why Pilniak wouldn't be revived soon, or Zamiatin either (whose *We*, a brilliantly prophetic *1984*, written in the 'twenties, is unknown to the younger generation). "You know," he said with a malicious grin, "even in this we are 'overtaking and surpassing' the West. You had only one resurrection. With us, they are a frequent occurrence." He discounted the importance of these rehabilitations, however. "It's just like the 19th century; our people neglect literature as literature, and take it too seriously as politics. They are reissuing Babel. I'm very glad. But politically this has no significance."

Better now, but not really changed. "Formerly when we were three, we assumed that one was a spy. Now it's one in—I don't know how many." She was a young doctor with whom I shared some dramamine on the plane, a Russian Jew, I would say, except that the term is meaningless in the Soviet Union where one's passport identifies one as a Russian or a Latvian or a Jew or a Pole. Tanya had been in medical school during the anti-cosmopolitan campaign; "it was a bad time," she said simply; she had effaced herself and felt lucky not to be dismissed. Her father and brother had not been so fortunate, both had lost their jobs, one at the university, one at a technical institute. Both were now working again because things are, after all, "better." "In their old positions?" I asked; Tanya seemed surprised, "Oh, no," she said, "that will probably not be. You see, they are not Party members." We spoke of Ilya Ehrenburg, whose novels Tanya admired; I told her that I had been shocked and saddened by his denunciation of Zionism and Jewish internationalism. She was thoughtful, "Yes, of course," then became rather angry. "But it's so easy for you; I've heard that you have Jews in your universities, in your Congress, that there are even Jewish millionaires. How can you judge Ehrenburg, or any of us? How can *you* judge?"

Most convincing to me were the views of

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an historian—convincing because, already established in an excellent career, rather an admirer of Khrushchev, he had good motive for wanting to believe in a real change. Besides this he was old enough to recall other periods of relaxation; steeped in Marxism, his analyses of every subject, even his jokes, were always political. We discussed the Khrushchev speech, sparring for a while; I was trying to find out if the version published in *The New York Times* was the same as that distributed (though not yet published) in the U.S.S.R.; he was trying to find out whether I'd really read the speech or was just bluffing to get information. "Khrushchev is tough," he said finally, "and a clever one too. But the 'little Stalinist' (his name for Molotov) has powerful supporters." He cited as evidence the section near the end of Khrushchev's speech, in which he suddenly seemed to backtrack, praising Stalin for having crushed the Trotskyites. This, he judged, was extemporaneous, inserted in response to the hostility he felt in the hall. "And I am enough of a Marxist to believe that without the proper material and ideological conditions, one or two men at the top can change very little."

His hatred of Stalin was intense; "if only Lenin had lived" was such a favourite phrase with him that finally I asked how, if he felt Khrushchev, as one man, could do so little good, could Stalin have done so much harm? Didn't he have to re-examine Marxism-Leninism as a political system, a system he evidently accepted and admired? Yes, this was true. But he did not care about an analysis of the theoretical system. Hadn't I mentioned that my husband was a philosopher? Yes. And was he interested in Marxism? Yes. But he didn't read Russian? Very little. "Not reading Russian must be a great help to him in his studies of Marxism. But what we need is not yet another theoretical *genial nyi trud**—we must study the actual history of the revolution. History! Do you know what it means to be an historian in this country? It's not a matter of facts, of research. Everything is tasks. The 'tasks' of history as posed by Marxism-Leninism! The 'tasks' of history in the struggle for peace! And after the Twentieth Congress, of course, there are so many new 'tasks.'"

"Is that all?" I asked in considerable surprise. "Isn't there also the chance to do some real work?" He thought not. Full sources were not available, and if they were, the results would not be publishable. "If some real work gets done, it will be by chance."

Of course the almost unanimous scepticism about Stalin's successors which I encountered among these thoughtful young people, does not necessarily mean that fundamental changes are not indeed taking place. For one thing, the sample is ludicrously small; for another, they may be mistaken, or they may be judging with the caution of those who have seen "new looks" before; some quite evidently spoke from a deep-seated disgust with all politicians: "they are all skin-savers (*shkurniki*)" I heard more than once. In any case, the foreigner's estimation of their mood depends a good deal on his presuppositions. A foreign visitor who had judged Western culture from Eliot's *The Wasteland* would be enchanted with the signs of health and vigour which he found among us; similarly we, reading the metaphors of Koestler and Orwell as fact, are astonished to find intelligence and curiosity and eccentricity.

THE intellectuals whom I happened to meet were impressive by any standard—but they glittered all the more in comparison with the myriad dull, educated fools by whom they were surrounded. Competent people, performing specialised jobs with, as far as I could judge, skill and assurance, these latter displayed an appalling acceptance of much of the stereotyped, intellectual vulgarity of Soviet internal propaganda. I think of an Intourist guide, a university graduate, who told me that she could not bear to live in a country where newspapers printed conflicting stories, because she would not know what to believe. "Soviet newspapers print only the truth," asserted a biologist who occupied what

* "Work of genius"—the phrase which always characterises any of Stalin's writings, in any Soviet book, on any subject.

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sounded like a very responsible position in the Academy of Sciences. With eloquence and considerable wit he presented the most tired arguments of anti-Westernism; the workers are "under the heel of the capitalists"; the munitions makers and monopolists are conspiring for war; the Communists and other "dissenters" are persecuted, jailed, liquidated. To factual rebuttals of these accusations he had one standard reply: "You are a patriot. You must love your country very much." Criticism of the Soviet Union—the shocking spread between the standard of living of an average worker and an average bureaucrat, the Soviet-inspired invasion of South Korea, statistics on socialists and other "politicals" imprisoned or dead, were met with indignation, disbelief, and a nervous turning of the head to see if this most unofficial conversation were perhaps being overheard. Fundamental to his ideology was, it seemed to me, not even a commitment to Soviet-brand "socialism," but simply a respect for power and strength. In our discussion of the American Communist Party I had cited its always extremely low membership figures as evidence that it represented the aspirations of no sizeable segment of the American population. "A very weak, useless party," he remarked scornfully. Later he asked me whom I would vote for in the coming elections. I told him Stevenson, the Democratic candidate. "You are of the Democratic party?" he asked. "Well, yes," I said, because it seemed just too complicated to explain about Americans who consider themselves some sort of socialist, register with the Liberal party, and vote for the Democratic candidates in national elections. Previously rather hostile, he was suddenly full of respectful admiration. "A member of the Party!" he leapt to his feet with such enthusiasm that his chair went reeling back, "A member of the Party, and so young!" and we had to shake hands across the table. Helplessly, I tried to explain, that *anyone* could be a member of a party ("this is modesty, modesty!") that the Democratic party had millions of members ("a very powerful party!") that there was no honour or glory in it—we had to shake hands again.

This was a man in his late forties or early fifties—almost old enough to belong to that "older generation" which has, we have been assured so often, retained a living memory of pre-revolutionary, or at least pre-Stalinist, intellectual freedom. I did hear of some glorious intransigents of this sort—to my great regret I met none. The dreariest, most outworn platitudes: "Soviet literature has lagged behind Soviet life"; or "Why should our writers produce pessimistic works when everything in our country is moving forward to a richer future?"—none of the young writers talked quite like that; these were the utterances of a well-known older author, one who is justly famous for the vivacity and originality of his prose. Of course, one tended to meet the older intellectuals under more formal circumstances; circumspectness may have been the chief source of their conventionality. A train trip of two and a half days, in which I shared a compartment with an older *intelligent*, was not, however, reassuring. She was a retired school-teacher, the wife of a retired university professor; in her seventies, she had passed more than half her life before the revolution. The story of her meeting with her husband was like a charming chapter from a 19th century novel of the *narodnichestvo*—students at the same gymnasium, they had met at a protest mass in memory of Shevchenko, the great Ukrainian poet who was considered a dangerous revolutionary by the Tsarist government. "Of course, none of us was religious, and we had such long debates—was it right to go to church, even as a political demonstration?"

"But you go to church now?" I asked, since I had noticed that she crossed herself and prayed at night before going to sleep.

"No, no," she seemed rather shocked. "Didn't I tell you my husband was a member of the Academy of Sciences?"

But she denied that there was any pressure not to attend church. "It simply wouldn't be fitting. Now in America, they say that everyone *has* to go to church. I can't understand that." There was so much about America that she couldn't understand. The children,

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who read no books, only comics about gangsters, the cocktails, the oppression of the workers. "I've read so many books about American life—Howard Fast, Fenimore Cooper, Jack London—the frontier, everything so wild and uncultured. I just can't have any feeling for American life, I can't see how ordinary people, how families live."

What I tried to do, I suppose, was to persuade her to make an act of the imagination, to think of American families living much as Russian ones do, in the eternal triangle of home, family, and job. But it was so much easier for her, when she was not thinking in the patterns of her own life, to follow even in conjecture the paths laid out by Soviet propaganda. "But aren't those Chinese a wonderful people! Just think, ten years ago they were all coolies—illiterate. And now! Why only last month, my husband told me, there was a Chinese visiting at the Academy. And he spoke Russian perfectly! Think of it—how quickly they've become a cultured people. And those Egyptians, now they've begun too. Schools, paintings, symphony orchestras!"

She was such a sweet woman, she called me *golubchik* and kept giving me home-made jam to put in my tea; the story of her life, as she told it in those two days, was so often punctuated with wars, famine, "hard times." She couldn't help boasting a bit about the fact that all of her family and friends were "professionals, cultured people"; and, statistically, I knew it must be impossible that some of them had not disappeared in the many purges through which she had lived. But questions about this brought only the vaguest response: "Well you know, darling, a revolutionary government. Illiteracy has been eliminated. In the village they read books, they have electricity."

"You were a socialist!" I cried in desperation, the last morning we were together. "Are you completely satisfied with the way things have gone since the revolution?" No, of course she wasn't. Who could have foreseen the villainy of Nazism, the spite of the kulaks? "But aside from that?" I persisted. Yes, there was one other thing. She and her husband were both deeply concerned about the decline in the study of the classics. The Soviet Union was the most cultured nation in the modern world, who could deny it? And yet, could a nation be truly cultured which neglected the study of Greek and Latin?

CERTAINLY it is true that a visitor to the United States or to any country of Western Europe would find the same educated mediocrity. But not precisely the same. For the easy, accepted allegiance would be pledged to a free press, experimental art and parliamentary democracy. Pledged just as uncritically, granted. It comes down, finally, to a matter of judgment, of choice. And after a month in the Soviet Union I found that I preferred a society where opposition parties are taken for granted, to one whose unanimity is taken for granted; and that I would rather be bored by the inevitable Van Gogh Sunflowers blooming over every middle-class mantel, than by the equally inevitable, carefully edited Lenin haranguing an alert, well-disciplined crowd. Van Gogh, after all, was an artist.

There was another matter in which the intellectuals tended to differ from other Soviet citizens. Most were at great pains to dissociate their dissatisfaction from any criticism of material life. Complaints were heard —from the speculators (often students) who besieged tourists on the street, wanting to buy nylons and perfume, from such as the salesman in a music shop, who, when I paid him 3 roubles for a small song book, remarked, "In America this would buy a suit." (And I could not persuade him otherwise.) But those whom I came to know went to quite the opposite extreme. Their generosity was touching and appalling. Living for the most part on aspirants' (as graduate students are called) stipends, they were constantly giving one gifts of books, candy, fruit; I reached the point of snapping "No!" when asked if I liked flowers, which was sufficiently stunning to stave off some of this extravagance. Natural kindness and hospitality seemed to be augmented by embarrassment for the extortionate rouble-dollar rate of exchange; then too, it

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was a matter of pride. One student happened to mention that his family hoped to move soon because they were six families in one apartment. I was tactless enough to express sympathy. "Oh, no," he said immediately, "it's quite all right. You see, it's a very large apartment, only. . . ." He had a perfectly logical mind, and realised that he was contradicting himself. "Only it's not always convenient," he finished, and quickly changed the subject.

Their future prospects doubtless play some rôle in the students' uncomplaining acceptance of their meagre standard of living. Successful artists, engineers, scientists, university professors—all earn fabulous salaries; Soviet scholars heard with awe that their Western colleagues were not remunerated for scholarly articles, and with incredulity that sometimes they even paid for the privilege of publication; Soviet writers were condescendingly sympathetic or openly scornful of American authors for the low royalty rates which they accepted. The students looked forward, if not to riches, at least to superior salaries, and they took this as a matter of course. Asceticism is not the thing at all—and yet I met a number who had chosen or hoped to find museum jobs, because, although they would be poorly paid, they would work with more freedom, and under less pressure, than in the Academy of Sciences or even in the universities.

And yet, after one has made every allowance for differing standards, for our consumption-culture custom of piling up inauthentic and unnecessary "necessities," the fact remains that, materially, Soviet life is hard, and this has affected the atmosphere of Soviet intellectual life. Like the populace as a whole, intellectuals rejoice in their moderate comforts after the terrible times they knew during the war. Some dramatically, some matter-of-factly, but everyone recalls hunger—not just for days but for years. In Leningrad I heard the phrase "a ration of one hundred and twenty-five grams of bread" again and again. There was no embarrassment, no attempt to disparage what the suffering had been. After a week or two I found that I could always pick out who had been in Leningrad during the nine-hundred-day blockade, or in Kiev during the occupation. Now equally well-fed and well-dressed, those who stayed looked older; they will never have the healthy good looks and vigour of their contemporaries who were evacuated.

Hard times and the memory of terrible times seem to have given a distinctive stamp of courtesy and even formality to their everyday life. Voices are never loud, gestures never exaggerated. The contrast here is to the cigar-smoking, candy-munching, pyjama-clad vulgarity of the over-fed Soviet bureaucrats, and it is marked indeed. There is a gentleness of manner which is extremely attractive—the more so because it seems to have no codified tradition behind it, but seems rather, in its grave naïveté, like spontaneously-created ritual. I was riding in a crowded bus with a man and his fiancée; she had to leave us first; she shook hands with me, with him; he rose, and remained standing, as best he could, till she had got off the bus. People go to great pains, adjusting chairs and coats and clearing off tables to make each other comfortable; greetings and farewells tend to be extremely polite; I received a letter from a woman my own age with whom I'd talked quite informally, it began, "Greatly-esteemed Mrs. Kathryn Feuer . . ." I was reminded of Yeats, of the dream that custom and ceremony can screen out the winds of disorder.

One rediscovers all sorts of uncomplicated pleasures; long leisurely walks, ending with a glass of tea, rambling jokes which can be retold without losing their humour. The characteristic mood—perhaps it is best defined by contraries. Gaiety is very rare indeed, while slick sophistication is totally absent; there is nothing comparable to Paris fashions or Broadway musicals, when elegance and professional competence conspire to give the passing illusion of art. One finds as little bearded Bohemianism as on any proper street in Greenwich Village. (I did meet one bearded poet who looked the part—then sat stunned while he delivered a fiery denunciation of rhymeless poetry, cubistic art, and modern decadence in general.) Perhaps the

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Bohemianism will come in the next ten years. The preconditions exist: a generation of complacent bourgeoisie who favour beaded lampshades and overstuffed furniture and whose slogan is a Russian version of "Boost—don't knock!" are already reaping their share of serpents' teeth in disorderly children who smash things and get into trouble with the militia. The intellectual rebels should not be far behind. But one must have enjoyed stability and comfort and conspicuous consumption for a rather long time before they seem depressing and boring enough to revolt against, and that time is not yet in the Soviet Union.

A TREMENDOUS team of American sociologists has described the behaviour pattern of Soviet society as marked by "sudden bursts of energy." If so, the young intellectuals do seem to be rebelling against this. They modify the many small discomforts of their life not with moments of blind exertion but with the steady dilution of a leisured, measured pace. Waiting for a movie to begin, waiting to be served in a coffee house, long intervals between theatre acts—these are neither irritating nor aimless, rather they are made part of a deliberate pattern, a time for rest and conversation. Haste is almost by definition undue; I once started, automatically, to run for a waiting bus. "Why run?" I was asked. "There will be another in ten minutes." A good deal of time seemed to be wasted in being awfully early for planes, trains, and appointments, for tardiness is considered rude, and, I think also, it is a trait associated with the uncultured, unwashed, unreasonable Russia which these people long to put far behind them. This is no Bolshevik fervour for promptness, but rather, again, a longing to give harmony, order, and grace to a life whose raw surface has so much inconvenience and joylessness.

Probably the difficulties of everyday living partially account for another rather surprising phenomenon. Among these sensitive, gifted, intelligent and generous people, who were living in a society where the differences between rich and poor are so marked as to amount to class repression, I found no humanitarian going-to-the-people social idealism. When I remarked on the extravagant spending among bureaucrats, on the frightful poverty of unskilled workers, on the prevalent styles in decoration which besides being ugly and ostentatious are those associated with a few wealthy proprietors and many menial servants, it was the criticism of the bureaucrats' vulgarity, of the officially-imposed bad taste to which they responded. The social issue itself aroused no interest. It seemed as if they were bored to death with all that. From their earliest childhood they have imbibed revolutionary catchwords in an official milk of inequality, injustice, and class distinction, and the effect has been one of perfect immunisation.

One of the strangest experiences of a visit to the U.S.S.R. is that of living among people who take their Marx and Lenin just exactly as prosaically as Americans regard Jefferson and Lincoln. Conventionalised, ritualised, canonised, the doctrines of class struggle and a vanguard revolutionary party have the same status, and about as much vitality, as the doctrines which school children in any nation memorise, forget, then accept as vaguely God-given for the rest of their lives. Forty years after their revolution Soviet young people get just as excited about it as they do about the Decembrist uprising of 1825 or the defeat of Mamai by Dimitri Donskoi in the 14th century. There were exceptions, of course. Two students, separately and cautiously, asked innumerable questions about Party history, about Mensheviks and SR's; they were astounded to hear of the memoirs published by all the great revolutionary figures, and hungry for details. Trotsky was of special interest; details of his political rôle, both before and after exile, were in demand, but of far the greatest interest was his biography of Stalin. Twice I was asked to go through it, chapter by chapter; most surprising, apparently, was that he continued to be a revolutionary and did not become a "mad dog of imperialism"; most pleasing, as one student remarked, "it seems he tried to write history, not just polemics."

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How dangerous such conversations were I really have no idea; Russian cities boast many large and beautiful parks and they were a favourite place to walk and discuss politics. During one such conversation, my companion simply stopped talking and slowed his step to allow someone, whose footsteps we could hear from behind, to overtake and pass us. The silence seemed tremendous. I hummed a line from "Motherland," an unofficial Soviet anthem very popular in the West: "I don't know any other country where a man can breathe so freely." "You know all our best jokes," my friend muttered. Stalin is certainly well-hated by the younger generation; however, they were utterly sceptical (as I am too) when I reported to them the Alexander Orlov-Isaac Don Levine thesis that Stalin had been a Tsarist police spy. "That's the oldest Communist technique," they said in contempt; "call your enemy a spy." I mentioned documents. . . . "Documents!" The scorn was mixed with amusement that anyone could be so naïve as to take documents seriously.

Often, however, the eagerness to hear denunciations of Stalin quite overcame caution.

THERE is indeed a general mistrust of startling pronouncements, extravagant statements, and great causes. "Russian boys," exclaims Ivan Karamazov to his brother Alyosha:

Look here, for instance, at this stinking tavern, how they meet and sit down in a corner. In all their lives before they've not known one another, and they'll go out of the tavern and not meet again for forty years, and well, what? what will they discuss in the minute they've snatched in this tavern? World problems, nothing else: the existence of God, immortality. And those who don't believe in God, well they'll talk about socialism and anarchism, about the transformation of all humanity on a new pattern, so that, well, it comes out the same, they're all the very same questions, only from the other end. And in our times masses, masses of our most original boys live only to talk about the eternal questions!

Perhaps I just didn't meet the right Russian boys, but this description, which is almost everybody's gospel for 19th century Russia, doesn't seem to apply today. I think that in Warsaw they are meeting in taverns and discussing eternal questions, and doubtless in Prague and Bucharest too. In the Soviet Union, however, the intellectual atmosphere seemed low-keyed, matter-of-fact, pragmatic. I received an almost uniform response, for example, to the question, "Who is your favourite Russian writer?" Chekhov was mentioned again and again. And Chekhov, in his life and in his work, typified the man of real but limited ambitions; he did not dream of discovering gravity but rather of curing the sick; he despatched his heroes not to the barricades but to the brickyard. In a similar fashion the intellectuals to whom I spoke had circumscribed their dreams of glory; the highest ambition which I heard voiced referred to a treatise which *might* be posthumously published, and even this was mentioned in a tone which derided such a lapse into vanity.

The love for Chekhov seems significant in another way. Chekhov was a pessimist despite himself, and an optimist despite his society. Whereas in America, at least, gloomy despair is a fashionable social attitude among college graduates, it is accompanied by a good deal of optimism about the success and satisfaction to be expected from future careers. In the U.S.S.R. the pessimism was impressive because it was not an accepted attitude, not a celebration of *Angst*. It was a bewildered pessimism, because it went hand in hand with a belief in a rational world where human happiness should be quite easily attainable. There was a good deal of interest in Freud (I even met a young woman who had, somehow, read a number of his works) but sooner or later all of those whom I met expressed surprise or disgust at what they considered our excessive preoccupation with existentialism, psychoanalysis, and questions of guilt. "Even unreason can be mastered by reason," an aspirant in philosophy finally asserted,

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"and that's the only good that can come out of this obsession. But you people talk about it too much. In your films, all your books, your so-called 'religious revival.' Why, I met another American and he tried to explain the stock market to me—it was all psychology. I understand that you even hypnotise your baseball players. It's no wonder you all think you're neurotic. You're like children who like to frighten themselves, and then jump at shadows."

I suggested that we tried to bring out into the open aspects of life which Soviet society tried to hide. "If there were a wild tiger in your apartment, wouldn't you prefer to have it locked up and hidden away?" he replied.

In this connection I thought it noteworthy that Dostoevsky, that well-known freer of tigers, though newly revived, was not the chosen prophet for most of these people. One found a small and passionately devoted cult, but otherwise, perhaps in self-preservation, many found his psychological analyses overcomplex and too extravagantly pessimistic, and his joy of life a bit absurd.

Similarly Mayakovsky, whose complete works are now being reissued, was not so popular among the intellectuals as one might have expected. "There are two ways to hate poetry," they said in Moscow, "to ignore Pushkin or to read Mayakovsky. And the second way is surer." Writers admired him for his revolutionary use of language; patriots admired him, partly because Stalin had told them to and partly because of his vigour and crudity—the very qualities which the intellectuals scorned. They loved to quote a very clever parody of his verse in which Mayakovsky visits New York . . . "like our village, maybe higher, wider. . . ." He stands atop the Empire State building, looks down at the people and movement below. "I spat on them, spat, spat, and my spit spelled out VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY!" There was surprise that he was admired in the West; it comes down, I suppose, to the same criterion of *kulturny* and *nekulturny*. For this is very much an operative concept for the intellectuals too, though their standards are not quite the philistine ones of the new bourgeoisie. They are not a group to make one think of manifestos; if they were to adopt one, however, it might well be Chekhov's famous letter to his brother Nikolai:

You have only one fault. It is the source of your false position, your misery, your intestinal catarrh. It is your utter lack of culture. Forgive me, please, but veritas magis amicitiae. . . . *It comes to this, life makes its own conditions. . . . And in my opinion, cultured people must meet the following conditions: 1. They respect human personality and therefore are always kind, gentle, courteous, obliging. They do not start a quarrel over a hammer or a lost eraser. . . . They excuse noise, cold, overcooked meat and jokes, and the presence of strangers in their rooms. 2. They have sympathy not only for beggars and cats. . . . 3. They respect the property of others and therefore pay their debts. 4. They are candid, and they fear lying like fire. . . . They do not gossip. . . . Out of respect for the ears of others they are more often silent. 5. They do not ruin themselves in order to gain sympathy from others. . . . 6. They are not vain. . . . Having done a penny's worth of work they do not go about, flourishing their portfolios, as if they have done a hundred roubles' worth, nor do they boast that they are admitted where others are not admitted. 7. If they have talent, then they respect it. They sacrifice peace, women, wine, variety to it. . . . In addition, they are fastidious. 8. They cultivate in themselves an æsthetic sense. They cannot fall asleep in their clothes, see cockroaches in cracks on the wall, breathe foul air. . . . They do not gulp vodka at any and every occasion, nor do they sniff around cupboards, for they know that they are not pigs. . . . For they must have* mens sana in corpore sano.

A "DECENT LIFE," just to be let alone, some silence in which to do one's work—these were the longings one heard expressed again and again. This seemed to me a fundamentally conservative group of intellectuals, who disliked and distrusted anything labelled "revolutionary" or "experimental"

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because of the endless and meaningless "go-ahead" propaganda to which they had been subjected. If they are conservative, however, that which they'd like to conserve does not seem to have focused on any particular historical period or intellectual movement. They do not identify their situation with that of intellectuals in any other period of Russian history, and they are not so pro-Western as to identify with us.

Why are they not pro-Western? Partly, of course, it is ignorance and misinformation. A very bright student of architecture assured me that all asphalt streets in America were being torn up, because Americans believed that cancer came from asphalt; a rather sophisticated university instructor hemmed and hawed a bit, but finally he had to know, was it true that Roosevelt had been poisoned? I replied that I was certain that this was not the case, and asked, "Who is supposed to have poisoned him?" He looked down at his feet and said, shyly but doggedly, "Truman." The arrest of Nina Ponomarevna took place while I was in Moscow; the incident was given only one interpretation: why had the British Government decided to provoke an incident at this particular time? No one seemed willing to consider even for a minute either the hypothesis that for some reason Ponomarevna *had* taken the five hats, or that, assuming she hadn't, the shopkeeper had made an honest mistake in accusing her. My suggestions that the British Foreign Office was unlikely to use hat shops and the local constabulary as the chosen agents of its intrigue was laughed away as naïve. Finally, thinking to make a joke, the next time the subject came up I remarked, "What I can't understand is why the Soviet Government should wish to provoke an incident with London at this particular time." My companion took this perfectly seriously. "Do you really believe . . . ? Perhaps. But I think that is over-subtle." That British workers enjoy a comprehensive health system, that Frenchmen and Italians often refuse to pay taxes, that Charlie Chaplin's movies can be seen in the U.S.A. (as they cannot in the Soviet Union; like Brecht, his politics are much praised, but his works are not shown), these were revelations, not to the man in the street, who merely disbelieved them, but to thoughtful people, who simply had no way of knowing.

Lack of enthusiasm for the West is not, however, only a matter of ignorance. They admired what they knew of our art and scholarship and envied our individual freedom; otherwise, they judged America to be even more mechanised, raucous, and vulgar than their own country, while Western Europe was characterised as "a dying continent." Marx and Lenin, it should be pointed out, are respected even by those who deride Soviet "Marxism"; the doctrine that Britain, France, Italy, and Holland were worn-out colonial powers, now living on borrowed time and borrowed money was generally accepted. It was fashionable to credit Stalin with the authorship of his article on linguistics "because who else would think up such stupidities," but to give credit elsewhere for his thesis that the next crisis in imperialism will be between the U.S.A. and Western Europe, a prediction rather widely subscribed to. I think that the big open question is posed by America; the torrent of questions about wages and prices, production and employment figures, with which every American tourist is greeted is not, as so many of them assume, merely envious curiosity about the promised land. The durability of American capitalism and its intentions and probable policies in world affairs are matters of serious speculation and comparatively uncommitted opinion among Soviet intellectuals. Many believe that the future is clearly a Soviet oyster, others seem to feel that the future is being thrust upon them, but underlying both views are always those doubts about America. Certainly I found no widespread belief in inherent Russian superiority or in the decadence of all Western nations, such as was noted by so many observers in Nazi Germany. Rather the propagandists continue to declare, and the man in the street often echoes it: "We must overtake and surpass America." "We must overtake and surpass the 18th century," remarked an art historian, as we gazed in mute horror at the

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contemporary Soviet paintings in the Tretyakov gallery.

JUST as Robinson Crusoe created a culture from what was available on his island, so do the Soviet intellectuals. Russian literature is like a giant reference-dictionary; scientists and historians know it well; one's like or dislike of a specific poem indicates a whole complex of attitudes. Even Russian painting, incomparably less rich and varied, receives a great deal of attention. It is important to have an opinion about this picture by Levitan or that one by Ge; the artists and writers seem to provide a universal vocabulary, capable of endless reinterpretation, which is a substitute for our changing fashions in philosophy, psychology, and sociology. This is, it must be emphasised, an intellectual pastime only; again and again I was shocked by the ignorance of many educated people about Russian literature and history . . . the editor who loved Tolstoy because his work was so optimistic, the graduate student who assured me that there had been serfdom till the 1917 revolution, the high-school teacher who *knew* that Dostoevsky had never been in Siberia ("he was a reactionary, why should they send him to Siberia?").

To appreciate the true quality of the culture they have constructed, one must measure it not only against the propaganda but also against the educational system and opportunities for research. It is my impression that standards in the universities are very high for the sciences and languages, but appallingly low in subjects where content becomes important. The true student of history, of philosophy, of literature, is almost entirely self-taught. I saw an advanced examination in the history of philosophy; the philosophers asked about were Marx, Lenin (twice), Chernyshevsky, and finally: "The meaning of J. V. Stalin's work, 'On the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union' for the development of philosophy." There was a current joke about a Korean student's brilliant performance at such an oral exam. Given the question "Discuss Voltaire's philosophy," he answered: "North Korean People were liberated by Great Soviet People. Before liberation of North Korean People by Great Soviet People, North Korean People were unable to read philosophy of Voltaire. After liberation by Great Soviet People. . . ."

The most serious drawback to study remains, however, the difficulty of access to sources. Boris, an aspirant in English literature, knew the classics well and had some original critical notions, but his questions were all about modern poetry. Yeats, Auden, Spender—he knew a few poems which had appeared, he said, in the early thirties, "now we begin to get a few more, but there has been, shall we say, an . . ." he took a deep breath to pronounce very carefully, "an hiatus." Dylan Thomas, T. S. Eliot? No, he didn't know them at all. "But surely you've heard of Eliot," I said. "Don't you remember Fadayev's remark: 'When monkeys can use typewriters, and hyenas compose verse, they will write like T. S. Eliot'?" "Ah, yes. *That* Eliot."

I was surprised a few days later to see that most of the books of these poets were listed in the main catalogue of the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library, in Leningrad, and I wondered why Boris had not found them. Other graduate students explained: only librarians can use the main alphabetical catalogue; the reading room catalogues and subject catalogue, which everyone can consult, are often incomplete; it is considered dangerous to request too many foreign books, which are often kept in the Special Preserve, requiring explanation and special permission. Some books in the Special Preserve are apparently not catalogued, for others there is a special notation on the card. There is no attempt to conceal the existence of such a system, one meets both librarians and students who at least pretend to take it as a matter of course. The Special Preserve even finds a surprising number of defenders—the books are available for qualified scholars of unquestioned loyalty; for the others, there are enough *good* books to read, it is better not to poison their minds with decadence and lies—the apologetics of censorship are drearily the same in all times and places.

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WHATEVER their differences, in politics, in personal outlook, the young intellectuals were as one in their hatred of stupidity and backwardness; some of them actually defended the harsh labour discipline on this account. Walking in the park one day, a friend and I stopped to watch some football practice. "Do you like football?" he asked. I replied that I preferred baseball, because the players were not only very skilful, but were also called on to make countless decisions, to use their heads. "Then it will never be popular here. Football requires only the use of the feet. Our people have very strong feet."

They were equally united in their love and respect for scholars or artists of real achievement. Students in quite different fields knew and reverenced the nation's "true" literary scholars; the name of Shchukin, who selected the great collection of French Impressionist and post-Impressionist paintings, now in the Hermitage, was pronounced with awe. One day, when I was visiting that very collection with four or five aspirants, they were suddenly hushed, and I saw that they were covertly watching a small man who was looking at the Monets. Later they explained. He was a noted professor, recently released from prison; although his work was not even remotely connected with their own, they all knew it, and spoke of him with affection.

In short—they have become extremely discriminating. I think of the writer who talked quite plausibly about socialist realism, then told me that his favourite reading was Tiutchev's poetry, "not because it answers my questions, but simply because it is so beautiful." I think of the girl I met one night at an open air concert in Kiev. Nina was a musician, and she was embarrassed all through the evening. The little talk which preceded each performance, explaining the music for the benefit of those present who'd never heard it before, charmed me, but she was scornful—it became apparent why when the audience, who had listened fairly attentively to the lecture, then conversed all through the music itself. The second number on the programme was Mozart; in the performance, precision and tempo were constantly sacrificed to a kind of sticky, violin sweetness; Nina could barely contain herself till the end: "Typical Ukrainian sentimentalism," she raged. "Formerly it was something authentic; there was wonderful peasant art, and folk tales, you could have a Gogol. But now, ah, since the Great October Socialist Revolution—the peasants are cultured. Formerly they made embroideries of birds, and flowers, now they weave airplanes and the members of the Central Committee into their tapestries. Formerly the sentiment concerned itself with young love, and Cossack exploits, and mysterious death. Now we have songs, 'Oh my dear little harvesting machine, I place a wreath of dear flowers on your dear little engine,' and we have Mozart, oozing honey like a beehive!"

We walked part way home together; the First of May Park, where the concert had taken place, was divided by a high and narrow bridge; it was called "The Devil's Bridge," Nina told me. I asked why; was it something from folklore? "No, it's because so many people have committed suicide there. *Before* the revolution, of course," she added, grinning in the moonlight.

I never saw Nina again; the next day, in the Museum of Russian Art, I felt that I met a friend of hers. I was examining what seemed to me a particularly well-decorated 18th century jug, he was looking at a painting nearby. We had exchanged opinions once or twice in some of the other rooms; suddenly he turned to me and said rather angrily, "Do you *like* that? Do you find something to *admire* about it?" I'd been wondering the same about the dreary, washed-out landscape he was studying with such attention, and said as much. "Of course it's not a masterpiece," he conceded. "But at least this man had studied European art, he was trying to use what he'd learned. Whereas *that*—just look at the crudity. Do you realise that was made in the 18th century? The 18th century! Hundreds of years after Michaelangelo, after Rembrandt, after our own Rublev, when the rest of Europe had civilisation and culture;

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how can you defend such art in the 18th century?"

In my "defence," which took the line of preferring a talented folk artist to an untalented educated one, I made the error of using the term "primitive." Primitivism, along with anarchism and nihilism, is a leading *bête noire* of Soviet intellectuals; I heard Kropotkin's philosophy; Blok's poetry, and the paintings of Rousseau all harshly criticised for these qualities. Such a view corresponds with official attitudes, of course, for the rationalist, "progressive" aspect of Soviet dogma still wins the young intellectuals' allegiance; it is the shoddiness and falsity of the cultural product against which they protest.

EARLY in the 13th century, when Russia was already torn by the struggle between Princes and Boyars, one Daniel addressed a petition to Yaroslav Vsevolodovich, ruling Prince of Pereyaslavl. Daniel may have been a banished courtier or perhaps an educated serf; he comes down to us as one of the first independent unaffiliated intellectuals, living in a time when Russian culture was so much a province of the official Orthodox Church that later scholars tend to question the authenticity of secular works seemingly of the period, for who could have written them? Daniel finds his unattached status as distasteful as would any modern "escaper from freedom"; he pleads for Yaroslav's protection: "Prince, my lord, do not regard me as the wolf the lamb, but regard me as the mother does her child." The hardships of his life are grim indeed, he recounts them in detail, explaining why he rejects the usual sources of security, a rich wife or the monastery. But this is no pseudo-posturing of principle, for Daniel is unabashedly servile: "You may say, Prince, that I have lied like a dog, but good dogs are a thing that princes and boyars love." For the princely court has its soldiers, its jesters, its musicians—good dogs all: why not a tame intellectual as well? This is Daniel's proposal to Yaroslav: his insight was shrewd, and for Russia, prophetic: "A brave man, Prince, you will quickly find, but a clever man comes dear."

Whether Yaroslav availed himself of Daniel's services we do not know, but Daniel's admonition has been taken to heart by Russian rulers of every century since. Peter and his translation projects, Katherine with her plays and satiric journals, Nicholas I personally censoring Pushkin's poetry, Lenin on literature, Stalin on every subject in the Academy—one can scarcely name a Russian ruler who has not had a finger in the intellectual pie. And one can unhesitatingly generalise that, the more the ruler wished to encourage enlightenment, the greater his commitment to Russian progress in the arts and sciences, so much the worse for culture. Censorship and subsidy, controls and caviar—these have been the twin props of mediocrity for generations.

And yet, in every century there have always been the glorious exceptions—the unknown author of the *Lay of Igor's Raid*, Maxim the Greek, whose original views on educational and theological questions sent him to prison again and again, Lomonosov, who quarrelled with everybody and contributed more to Russian learning than seven times seventy Government Commissions, Radishchev, one of the most courageous men of the 18th century, who died of fear when taunted with the prospect of reimprisonment—in the 19th and 20th centuries the names become too numerous to list, all the cantankerous, gifted men, their works seeming to us more wondrous, their selves more appealing just because of the precious rarity of their intransigent integrity.

Stalin's successors have been notably quiet on the cultural front so far, but we can be sure that they understand very well the dear value of a clever man. The youngest generation of Russian intellectuals have been rather quiet too. But they are there. Thinking. Writing. Biding their time.

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Ann Chadwick: The Story

MAKE up the fire, Johannes, the nights are drawing in.
Tell us a story.

I only know one story.

Tell us that one.

Here is the story then.

Just a moment; is it true?

It wouldn't be worth telling if it weren't true.

Tell us then.

Here it is then.

Just one moment; is it a ghost story?

I don't know.

Is it scary?

Maybe it is; and maybe it isn't.

It's true though?

Yes. Have you done?

Just one more moment; am I in it?

Not if you don't want.

Are you in it?

Sometimes.

What does that mean?

Sometimes I dream about it; then I'm in it.

All right, I'm ready.

Here it is then.

Once upon a time, it was a night like this, cold enough to freeze the breath on your lip, and the clouds just parted after three days' storm. The snow was hardly finished falling, and the moon full, so it was like day, though milking time was past and the stock fed and the lamps lit in the kitchen.

Go on....

First make up the fire, Johannes. Baste the bird.

You spoke to them in a foreign tongue, darling, and I could have sworn you didn't say what you thought you were saying; and yet when they replied you seemed perfectly satisfied.

O yes. O quite.

I suppose it's something subconscious.

That's it.

Go on, do.

Well, the boys had had a long day. Their mother was giving them supper in the kitchen. There was water to get. The youngest boy took two pails and the wooden yoke from the dairy. Once outside he didn't need a lantern to see what he was doing; the moon was on the snow with an icy, glaring light, throwing up the barns like holes in the patternless whiteness, like pitshafts into space. He walked out into the new snow, drawing his lips over his teeth against the shock of the cold, watching the barns from under his fur cap out of the corner of one eye, listening for nothing.

Was it creepy?

There was nothing to listen to; but he listened.

O Lord. I know.

Well, after a while the other boy wondered what was keeping his brother. He got out a fur cap and gloves too, and some odds and ends of gear in case ice had formed in the well. He went out; and he could see his brother's footprints, like a range of little inky craters, leading straight out across the yard to within fifty feet of the well. He could see where the pails and the yoke lay in a black smudge of shadow in the snow. He stood there for a moment, none the wiser, then he slowly followed up the trail to where the pails were lying. There, in the middle of an unprinted field of dazzling and innocent purity, the footprints stopped.

Was it creepy?

YES IT WAS. He just stood there staring at the two pails stupidly. They lay where they had been set down, as though the boy,

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momentarily distracted from his purpose, had paused to look at something. The footprints next to them were clear and sharp as those leading to the spot. There was nowhere the boy could have gone. He WAS gone. Creepy wasn't the word for it.

This is true, isn't it?

Absolutely true.

All right.

Well, as he stood there, the elder brother felt the cold strike through his clothing to his very centre, suddenly, like a shadow on a bright day, making him shiver, and look round, and look round again. On every side of him where he could not see, a dead weight of apprehension leaned heavily, vanished when he looked, crept up and leaned from the other side.

This was all new for him; he wasn't used to feeling like that. He refused to turn round again out of fear. He called his brother's name, loudly and angrily. He was going to give the kid hell.

His voice sounded hoarse and bodiless. He repeated his shout over and over; and each time it fell on the icy air, half muffled at once, hastily dissolving. Nobody answered.

But then . . . just as he was drawing breath for a shout he was interrupted by his brother's voice.

It was calling, wildly and even loudly, not in answer but spontaneously, not from nearby, but unnaturally, as though from beyond earshot and mechanically relayed. The cries were airy and sustained, carried half-tangled in confusion through the dead still winter air. The words were distorted, drawn out and telescoped as though by time as well as space, as if called out years ago and all reduced to echo.

Help! his brother cried, or had cried. *Help! O help me!*

He stood still, half unbelieving. Inside his clothes a hot blushing sweat of fear suddenly ran on his skin. He shrank small, absolutely silent. His teeth bit on each other until his jaw felt stiff. The first moment he could move he bolted straight to the house and his mother.

Lord God.

His mother took one look at him, and she knew, not the kind, but the degree of trouble. She didn't say a thing; she went for her outdoor clothes as fast as she could move. With his back against the door he watched her dress. He didn't know what to say, not to frighten her the way he was frightened himself. He said: I don't see him; something's wrong maybe.

They went out. As he had done, she went directly to the pails at the end of the line of footprints, and stared at them, and all around. Her face in the moonlight was more scandalised than frightened. She was angry, because it was something she couldn't understand.

Shout again, she said.

He thought: then she had heard him shouting. Had she heard anything else? Could he maybe have imagined the whole thing? But the footprints lay there in the snow, in black and white.

He shouted. Once, twice, hesitating in dread between the loud warm blasts of his own voice between his lips. There was nothing.

Shout! she told him.

He yelled his brother's name with all his force and the desperate defiance of his fear. The air sopped up his voice like a blanket. He roared like a bull; his own efforts warmed him. The silence shut down again between each shout, like cork receiving the blade of a heavy axe. Nothing was as usual; everything was like something else, strange, stimulating, unnerving.

It was ridiculous to hear his mother muttering to herself: there ain't no bird big enough. It was crazy, but you thought first of all of a bird. He opened his mouth for a blood-curdling yell that would shake the biggest eagle in the world off the top of the mountain.

O Lord. I know what's going to happen.

Well, maybe you want to tell this story yourself?

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

The voice came, sighing, overlapping itself with a kind of musical aerated echo, light

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as a thread in that heavy miasma of moonlight, and yet, intolerably weighted with despair.

Help me! Help me! Love of Christ, help me!

Oh-h-h God in heaven . . .

Ah-h. . . . His mother sighed, a drunk sort of sound of pain and relief.

She had heard it. She had heard it. Whatever he had thought, he wasn't alone with it. The physical chill of excitement under his hot sweaty clothes was almost pleasant. He sucked in the dead air, and blinked, and put his shoulders back, and blew out a great plume of breath. They moved together, let loose from a sort of paralysis.

They rushed to the well.

On the evidence, the well was impossible. The boy's footprints came nowhere near. No mark at all disturbed the snow for many feet around. The troughs were buried; the pump was untouched; snow completely blanketed the wooden cover. And the voice had not come from there. As far as ears might be trusted, it had seemed to come from overhead. But it was the only place where he could possibly have lain hidden, near enough to have been so completely audible; and somehow the queer sound of his voice, and its urgency, suggested it.

The snow on the concrete platform was virgin. They had no eyes for the evidence. The horror was in their ears. They snatched and threw the cover back; they shouted down; they sent the bit of broken ploughshare on a rope's end, used for breaking the rare ice that sometimes formed, down until it hung in the unfrozen water. Their shouts echoed dismally, unanswered.

The cold pressed without pity; but they hardly knew it. A kitchen lantern lowered on another rope showed nothing. If he was in the well, then he was at the bottom of it. But now they neither of them thought that he was there. They were more ready to believe their eyes. They had another idea.

What if he had meant to play a joke. Supposing he had back-tracked, slipping past them somehow in the kitchen, or at the door, and hidden somewhere in the house, or locked himself in somewhere, or fallen and hurt himself.

They lit every lamp they had, and started in the dairy. From room to room, with a sort of desperate, methodical, unreasonably meticulous care, they searched the house, holding their lamps in the chimneys, opening trunks in the attic, calling.

At first, half persuaded by the idea of a prank, the elder brother searched with a special malicious anger in ridiculous places, where concealment even deliberately would have been impossibly difficult. His spite wore off. They found nothing. They went out again, to the buildings, and combed stables and barns, machine sheds and corn bins, mangers and barrels and pig sties and hen houses. Nothing.

At dawn there was still nothing, but the returning pangs of superstitious fear, the occasional sourceless and unheeding voice, beseeching help, untouched by all their efforts to bring the help it asked.

They ate the cold supper finally. They were past speaking, or blaming each other, or comforting each other. The boy saddled a pony and rode to the nearest farm.

In a few hours he was telling the story; and neighbours rode back with him, silent between scepticism and curiosity. The sun poured light now, where the moon had before; it glazed the blazing surface with a thin icy crust, and threw deep blue shadows into the marks of their last night's search. The story was told again, and illustrated in the snow. About the spot where the pails still lay, silent and doubtful, the men stood surmising until the cold bit them. They ate in the farmhouse kitchen, and then set out on another search of the buildings. The stock was fed and watered; the chores done; even the water he had gone to fetch, fetched at last. But the boy was not found.

Some wanted to send for the sheriff, and some for the preacher. The elder boy saddled up again, and went off to fetch them both. While he was gone the men went out and marked off an area, a little belatedly, where

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no one was to tramp and obscure the evidence further. They had another look in the well while they were about it. It came on dusk. They were ready to come in again, when they heard his voice.

In the late sun, through the long violet shadows, it rang out frail as a breeze, sinking, swelling louder for a moment, and dying on a long sad note. There was no wind at all. The sound was weary, with a timeless weariness, a desperation, like a voice from hell.

Help me! Help me!

His mother ran out to them. She had watched them from the kitchen window half the day, waiting for the time when they would finally believe what they had been told.

He's alive! she yelled at them, as though they had been deaf before, and even now she scarcely trusted them to hear and understand her.

He's alive somewhere! You just get your hands on him, that's all! You just get your hands on him quick! She reached out and grabbed her nearest neighbour by the collar of his coat, and shook him like an inattentive child. They stared at her with the fear of God on them. They took her inside; she wasn't dressed for the cold.

Well, it was the preacher's opinion that some perfectly reasonable explanation would be found; and that it was a lot of fuss for nothing. All the sheriff wanted to do was drag the well. He was all set to ride for his tackle; and not liking to say what he thought, he wanted the elder boy to ride along with him. The other men, that had already heard the voice, didn't like to say what they thought either; but it was a different thought from the sheriff's; and it was different from the preacher's. As far as they were concerned they were all losing their time. They felt the woman's eyes on them, like the man who tries to slip out by himself feels the eyes of his dog.

It was the third night. The whole place had been scoured again, from top to bottom. The sheriff and the boy were going to ride that night, to be back by morning so that some of the others could get back to their own farms. The moon was up again, with one side already rotting away. Still there was no wind, only, as they left the house, silence so deep you might think you heard the world turning in its flight.

The sheriff had never set much store by their accounts of the voice, though he pretended to respect their word. He thought, if he thought anything, that they were hanging together for the boy's sake; that there was more to the thing than met the eye. But mostly he didn't think about it at all, and concentrated on his duty, fetching the tackle, dragging the well. Off they went across the yard.

It swelled out suddenly over their heads like music. Only when they'd listened a second, jumping like frightened ponies, cocking their ears toward it, did it sound like a real voice at all, or like real words. It faded, tenuous, stretched in a fine thread of physical sorrow, the words overlapping sweetly, swelled again on an unfinished sob of despair, and ceased without an echo.

Well, they looked at each other. They had only just left the kitchen stove, and through their heavy riding clothes they felt a chill seep and run like cold water on their crawling skins. The frost went for them like a ray of light, like beams of the moon from cold places beyond the world. O, like cold from dead hills deep in the icy fields of space, like cold from empty valleys paralysed with ice.

O Lord, I know.

Well, the sheriff quit trying altogether. He was a man who knew when he was licked. The preacher, well, he never got to hear the voice at all; so they paid no mind to what he said about it, and he went away still thinking he was in the right.

All through the remaining weeks of winter, and into the spring, the neighbours spelled each other, staying at the farm for a few days at a time, making a token effort to help the mother out. She shamed them into it. Almost every day someone would hear the voice of that boy. Nobody ever found him.

When the sun began to strike warm again,

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and it was time to turn the stock out, they noticed that the voice was fading. By that time the mother was tired of her faith. She no longer believed it was a sign he was alive. All she cared about was keeping strangers off the place. The curiosity of strangers, especially when the weather favoured it, and people from all over came to talk to her about it, wanting to stay, and wait to hear the voice themselves, put the spite of the devil into her. If she couldn't find that boy herself, nobody else was going to get the chance. The neighbours were glad enough to drop away. From the first day they had known there was something unnatural in it, and he would not be found, or if he was it would be worse than if he wasn't.

Oh! Lord.... What did you mean by saying that?

Saying what?

That it would be worse than if he wasn't.

I mean, they might have found something they couldn't have let rest in peace.

What sort of something?

Look, it's impossible to tell a story if someone interrupts.

O darling....

It's impossible to tell a story if someone simply refuses to understand. There are some things about every story, especially true stories, which are too delicate, too subtle, to be defined.

Well, anyway, the bird is almost done.

You aren't basting.

I will. Please go on. I won't say anything. You can be as mysterious as you like. It's a lovely story.

Well, as I say, the mother listened to it fail with some sort of relief. But the other boy; he had come to curse it. It was a mockery to him. He was a big boy, and the farm was his. It struck him in his self-respect.

He stuck it out to the end. The voice failed, and wasted like a summer pond, shimmering into the air in mirage waves of liquid distorted sound. It evaporated. One day they thought they heard an echo, quailing before the slight force of the summer breeze. The next day no one thought at all. Later on, they couldn't remember which day was its last.

A lovely story. You ought to tell the others; it would amuse *him* particularly.

Sometimes I dream... and a moment comes, there is a pause. I remember that moment, that pause in doubt, after the cold strikes, when the foot is lifted and hangs and does not descend, and for a moment holds the whole world still in eternal stillness, while the heart calls out for help.

Help me!

I have a memory of time, of days and hours, unable to make a sound, to move, and the heart clamouring in frozen silence, for help.

He doesn't inhale, you notice. He gets through a hundred and twenty cigarettes a day, all for the pleasure of tasting them burn. I'm surprised it doesn't make him sick as a dog, except that he is a dog. Now for the curtains. Draw up your chair. Have a sundowner. The bird's done. I've made the fire up.

It's a funny thing, Johannes. The wood is in shadow, and we're in the sun. Have you warmed the wine? We're in the sun for a moment. Seize ye banana while ye may.

Well, but we work ourselves to a standstill for it, darling. So as to be able to knock off in the evening.

We work for leisure. We fight for peace. We vote for tyrants. We drug for health. And then like butterflies we're off over the grassy uplands flicking our little furry kilts, *so* reluctant to get down to brass tacks and say definitely whether we want strawberry or chocolate.

Do pull up your chair.

Seize ye banana, but through a mist of tears, like a lunatic murdering his soul for good money. O Jo, I'm not so bad as you.

Do come along. It's not for the usual reasons after all. It's something subconscious, really.

Yes, that's it.

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Wayland Young

Mutation Morality

"Mr. Richard Fort. *It is obvious from the report and from the corresponding American report, that an enormous amount of long-term research work, particularly on the genetic effects of radiation, has to be carried out. It will have to go on for the rest of the century, and a good deal longer.*
Mr. Leslie Hale. *Dropping bombs all the time?*
Mr. Fort. *Does the hon. Member wish to interrupt?*
Mr. Hale. *Yes. Is the hon. Member suggesting that we continue research work for a century, dropping these bombs all the time to see what happens to three generations of the population?*
Mr. Fort. *I understand that the hon. Member is not interested in fundamental genetic research.*"

Hansard, July 16th, 1956: col. 940

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THIS article is about the political and ethical consequences of the rise in the human mutation rate which is being brought about by the atomic age. There was last year a wave of publications which mark the first sizeable consolidation of knowledge about the genetic effects of ionising radiation; in particular the report of the Medical Research Council, *The Hazards to Man of Nuclear and Allied Radiation*, published as a Blue Book, Cmd. no. 9780, in June; the equivalent American report, *The Biological Effects of Atomic Radiation; Summary Reports*, published by the National Academy of Sciences and the National Research Council, also in June; and the *Proceedings of the International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy*, published by the United Nations at New York last summer, volumes 11 and 13 of which largely deal with this problem. Everything in the first two publications is accessible and of interest to a determined layman, and so is much of the third, particularly the controversial paper by the American geneticist and Nobel prizewinner, H. J. Muller, of which more below. The expository part of what follows is based largely on these publications. I apologise for its length, but I think the principles of radiation genetics are far enough from being common knowledge among ordinary educated people to justify it.

THERE are several different kinds of ionising radiation; they penetrate living tissue to different extents and hurt it in different degrees and in different ways. We are exposed all the time to harmful radiations from interstellar space (cosmic rays), from the ground under our feet, from the bricks and stones of our houses, from the air we breathe, and from certain elements in our own bodies. There is nothing we can do about that. We may also be exposed to harmful radiations from X-ray machines, from luminous watches, from radio-active isotopes used in medicine and industry, from nuclear reactors

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and the radio-active wastes they emit, and from the explosion of atomic bombs. About this, we can do what we like.

Radiation damage can be divided into five categories: (1) immediate death, (2) immediate illness, (3) long-delayed illness, (4) an earlier death than would otherwise have been expected, but not preceded by any specific illness, and (5) genetic damage to future generations. The first four depend simply on the dose; the last is rather different, and forms the subject of this article. The unit by which radiation is measured is the röntgen, or r. A dose of 1,000 r over a short period will kill anyone. A dose of 500 r will kill half the people exposed, and the rest will recover only after a grave illness. Lower doses, when you get below the range which will produce the immediate "radiation sickness," are capable of producing, often many years later, various cancers and anæmias, and most typically leukemia. This part of the picture is fairly well understood by now; there are international and national "permissible doses" of radiation for those whose work requires them to be especially exposed, and there is no one who doubts that, as far as the individual's *health* is concerned, these doses leave a very large margin of safety. On the other hand it is maintained by Muller and others that for every röntgen of whole-body dose you receive, provided it is spun out over months and years, you may statistically expect to die about a week earlier than you otherwise would have. Muller* calculates that each decade a man works at the "maximum permissible dose" for specially exposed workers will shorten his life by a year or two.

When living tissue is moderately damaged by radiation it will, with one exception, recover, just as it will recover from any other moderate damage. Thus a dose which if you receive it inside a few minutes might harm you, will, if it is spread out over many years, do you no harm at all. Almost everywhere in the body the damaged cell will either recover its pristine form, or else be replaced by scar tissue. But there is one place where this is not so, and that is in the gonads. Damage here is permanent, and thus cumulative, no matter how long the dose is spread out.

THE gonads are the cells which lie ready in the testicles of men and the ovaries of women for the formation of their children. Within these cells lie the chromosomes, 24 in number, which are strips consisting of submicroscopic entities called genes, arranged in line. When sperm and ovum meet, the cells in each fuse and the 48 chromosomes arrange themselves in 24 pairs, the chromosomes in each pair lying side by side. Each gene from the father lies in these pairs of chromosomes opposite the corresponding gene from the mother, and every time a cell divides to make two the new cell carries an exact replica of the 24 chromosome pairs, with their genes in order. You thus carry your father and mother in every cell of your body. The only exception to this rule is in the formation of the gonads themselves when the pattern of 48 chromosomes in pairs reverts to the pattern of 24 single chromosomes. This latter very complicated process is called meiosis; during it, on average, half the genes from each of your parents are eliminated.

Every so often something happens, and one of the genes in the single chromosome in a gonad changes, or mutates. It may change its shape, or break away and join up again in the wrong place, or disappear altogether. When the sperm or ovum containing this mutant gene meets an ovum or a sperm in procreation, a cell will be formed which contains a disparate pair of chromosomes in which a mutant gene lies opposite a normal gene, and at every subsequent division of the cell the mutation will be reproduced until the adult man or woman born of this procreation carries the mutant in every cell of his body. The mutant may or may not be among the genes which are eliminated at meiosis, and if it is eliminated at one meiosis, it may not be eliminated at another meiosis in the same parent. When a mutant is eliminated, it will on average be replaced in the offspring by a mutant from the other parent, so that the

* *Journal of the American Society of Safety Engineers*: August 1956.

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total number remains constant from generation to generation.

Now it is thought that every human being carries about 6 or 8 mutants, and almost all mutants are harmful. The harm they can do is terrible and manifold. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the vast majority of mankind are not terribly harmed 6 or 8 times over. The apparent contradiction here is explained by the mechanism of recessivity. The great majority of mutant genes behave in a recessive manner; that is to say, when they find themselves paired opposite a normal gene, the normal gene carries the day. The mutant will lie in wait, generation after generation, until one day it meets a similar mutant. Then it will assert itself, and the result may be idiocy or some other disaster. Other mutants behave in a dominant manner, and will enforce disaster at once on the normal gene with which they are paired. The behaviour of mutants is in this respect the same as that of normal genes, for example those governing such pleasant matters as the colour of the hair. Red hair comes of a recessive gene, and will only crop up when two red-hair genes meet. On other occasions the dominant non-red-hair gene will have the day.

Nevertheless, you often see people with no more than reddish lights in their hair, and it is similarly thought that a recessive mutant can do quite a lot of damage before it meets the similar mutant which will terminate its existence, and that of its bearer. It is thought that a lot of general weediness of physique, vague ill-health, and early death, are due to recessive mutants only partly overridden by normal genes.

Mutations are occurring all the time, and the load of mutations carried by any human population remains more or less constant, at 6 or 8 per individual. It follows that mutants must also be dying out all the time, and the only way a mutant can die out (except in meiosis), is by the childlessness of its last bearer. The father of radiation genetics, H. J. Muller, holds that "practically every mutation represents a postponed disaster." This striking phrase is another way of saying that mutant genes don't go on for ever; however recessive they are, they will sooner or later meet a similar mutant and there will be a "disaster."

SO FAR we have been considering the matter from the point of view of the mutant gene, and have observed non-committally that it will cause a certain amount of "harm" and sooner or later will die out in a "disaster." Let us now see what these disasters are. It has long been known that certain sorts of idiocy, imbecility, dwarfism, deformity, etc. have a predominantly genetic origin. Indeed, some of the knowledge of how genes behave comes from the observation of "bad" family trees. I shall try to give an idea of some of the more conspicuous diseases in question.

Acrocephaly means "sharp-head." The skull grows in a wrong shape, high and pointed in front, flat behind. The malformation of the head makes it impossible for the eyes to grow properly; they may be grossly distended and bloodshot, sometimes tending to face inwards towards each other. The fingers and toes may grow together in a single mass, sometimes with one wide nail across the end. The understanding will be affected by the impeded growth of the brain inside the "steeple" skull.

Microcephaly means "small-head." Everything above the eyebrows is on too small a scale, and the lower part of the face comes forwards like that of a bird. The scalp grows normally and consequently hangs in loose folds. But the brain cannot grow normally inside, and the degree of idiocy depends inversely on the amount of room there is for it to grow.

Epiloia is marked by a red fungus-like growth, often across the nose. This is matched by a similar growth inside the skull. Epileptic fits go with it.

Phenylketonuria is an all-over condition. The metabolism is incapable of transforming one particular amino-acid, and the resultant chemical unbalance makes a very small, warped stature, light hair and eyes, idiocy. All these conditions and many others are found in all degrees of severity and carry a

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mental age of anything from O (total idiocy, though these don't usually survive) up to a point where it is not worth anyone's while to do more than remark that so-and-so seems rather odd-looking and immature.

Your "low-grade mental defective" is not unhappy, or at any rate not more so than most of us. He doesn't know what hit him, and the harder it hits, the less he knows. Congenital idiocy is its own anæsthetic.

So much for the conditions which have come at various times under the headings of idiocy, mental defect, amentia. The conditions which have come at various times under the headings of madness, lunacy, insanity, mental illness, dementia, psychosis, are less well understood in their genetic aspects. It is believed that in these cases mutation is no more than a predisposing agent, not a predominant cause, as in the other group. The two main categories are schizophrenia, where the predisposition is governed by a recessive mutant, and the manic depressive psychosis, where it is governed by a dominant mutant. The schizophrenic is shut away in a private and more or less permanent world of unreality and hallucination. He does not know he is mad. The manic depressive, who is far more often depressed than manic, is reduced sometimes to a complete standstill by misery and guilt. His condition comes and goes, and even during his depression he may know that he is mad. The schizophrenic may be happy or not; it depends on the nature of his illusions. The depressive cannot be, by definition. In this country, more hospital beds are occupied by mental patients than by all the others put together.

There are also physical diseases caused by mutant genes which do not necessarily involve impaired understanding. Many intelligent dwarfs are so for genetic reasons, and the disease of hæmophilia has been understood perhaps longer than any. In this disease the blood does not clot in contact with the air, so that the slightest wound is a potential threat of death; shaving, or the extraction of a tooth, are grave dangers. Hæmophilia appears in the men of a line, but not the women, who only transmit it. That is to say, it is neither purely dominant nor purely recessive, but belongs to the group broadly called "sex-linked."

But to get an idea of the whole range of disasters which can be inflicted by mutations, think of a part of the body, then think of something which could go wrong with it. And then remember that unless you are a pediatric specialist (for these conditions appear in infancy and childhood), you won't have thought of the half. Here is a black litany of some of the other conditions which may be caused by mutations. Albinism, allergies, blindness, club foot, deafness, gargoylism, hare-lip, no incisors, lobster hands, mongolism, monsters, six fingers, web toes. The following diseases and syndromes: Darier's, Gaucher's, Laurence-Moon-Biedl, Niemann Pick, Oguchi's, Pelizæus-Merzbacher. Acholuric jaundice, alcaptonuria, amaurotic idiocy, amyotonia, anidrotic ectodermal dysplasia, blue sclerotics, cerebral diplegia (the familiar spastics), cleido-cranial dysostosis, diabetes, distichiasis, epidermolysis bullosa, hæmochromatosis, ichthyosis, Leber's optic atrophy, megalocornea, muscular dystrophy, oxycephaly, pyloric stenosis, telangiectasia, transposition of the viscera, xeroderma pigmentosa.

RADIATION is among the agents which can give rise to new mutations. We plunge now into one of the most tangled problems which have ever confronted the human mind. The questions: How much radiation is there about? How much more will be caused by such and such a new development? How much radiation gives rise to how much new mutation? How much harm does how much new mutation do?—these are among the most appallingly wide and shifting and elusive which it has ever been anybody's business to answer. They cannot possibly be encompassed together by any one mind, and answers to them can only be constructs raised on the different approaches and calculations of hundreds of minds. The component questions must of course be answered in predominantly statistical terms, but at every turn you come up bump against

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the ontological ground of science itself. Entities turn into hypostases, scales slide away round the corner, kind and degree mingle and explode, cause and propinquity cock snooks at each other, and all the time and everywhere you find hypotheses and correlations crying out for test and verification. But the geneticists and nuclear physicists of the world are beginning to find that their answers lie within a range of two orders of magnitude; that is to say that none of them accuses any other of being more than a hundred times out, and none of them accuses the man with the middle answer of being more than ten times out. In the most important fields, the scale of doubt is very much narrower.

To the layman this sounds at first like a hopeless situation. But if the middle answer to a question is such as to suggest or impose action for the avoidance of clear evils, the fact that there is a divergence between the extreme answers does not excuse us from acting. In what follows I shall in general deal with the middle answers.

In England the level of "natural" background radiation is such as to give everybody an average dose of radiation to the gonads in thirty years of 3 r. In the United States it is 4·3 r. The percentage of live births where the child sooner or later suffers appreciably from defects of "simple genetic origin" is 2 per cent; that is to say, one in fifty. So much for the present position.

But background radiation in the atomic age is rising and will continue to rise. We now come to the question: How much more radiation will cause how much more harm? The relevant facts here are deduced from observations not of men, where the length of a generation is taken to be thirty years, but of mice, where it is four months, and of the geneticists' standby, the fruit-fly *Drosophila Melanogaster*, where it is only fourteen days. In all genetic matters where the comparison has been able to be made, man has been found to behave very like the mouse and quite like the fruit-fly. Moreover, the ways in which he differs from them are consistent and comprehensible. It may be that the genetic effect of increased radiation on man will differ from the genetic effect of increased radiation on mice and fruit-flies in a way different from that in which other aspects of his genetic behaviour differ from the corresponding aspects of the genetic behaviour of mice and fruit-flies. The best that can be said is that it is unlikely.

TO START talking about this, you need a unit or concept about which the question can be asked: How large is it? To meet this need, the "doubling dose" has been devised. The doubling dose of radiation is that average dose to the gonads of a population, spread over the first thirty years of the life of each man or woman, which will produce a doubling of the mutation rate and thus, in time, a doubling of the incidence of mutation-induced diseases; that is to say, a rise from the present 2 per cent of live births (see above) to 4 per cent. The qualification "in time" is very important here. If the background radiation were to be suddenly jacked up to this doubling dose, whatever it may be, the rate of new mutations would immediately follow suit. But only those mutations which were dominant would lead to an immediate doubling in the incidence of the corresponding diseases. Of the diseases I mentioned earlier, acrocephaly and epiloia, for instance, and the predisposition to manic-depressive psychosis, would double in three generations. Sex-linked diseases, such as hæmophilia, would rise to 90 per cent above the previous level in six generations, and thereafter approach the double in a flattening curve. Diseases such as phenylketonuria and microcephaly, and the predisposition to schizophrenia, which are caused by recessive mutants, would rise very slowly but at an even rate, reaching 50 per cent above the previous level in not less than fifty generations and reaching the double after more than a hundred generations.*

* There is no reason to suppose that increasing radiation will produce any new forms of mutation disease; it will only increase the incidence of the existing ones. In one respect, at least, science-fiction is unduly depressing.

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In order to establish the size of the doubling dose, geneticists all over the world have been irradiating populations of mice and fruit-flies and drawing conclusions from these and other observations. One thing is certain; since the level of natural radiation is 3 r (in Great Britain) and since not all mutations are caused by radiation, the doubling dose cannot be less than 6 r. Values have been advanced between 15 r and 150 r; this is one of the questions where the answers lie within one order of magnitude. But the Medical Research Council in its report concludes: "The best estimate that we can make in the light of present knowledge, is that the value in general lies somewhere between 30 r and 80 r." The American Academy of Sciences agrees. If the layman takes the value of the doubling dose as 50 r, he is doing the best he can.

We can now proceed to consider what genetic damage we are inflicting, or may in future inflict, on ourselves in excess of that from natural radiation, which we cannot avoid.

I have with some difficulty concocted a table from figures in the British and American Reports. Column 1 shows the source of radiation. Column 2 shows the average gonad dose to the population over 30 years if the source continues at its present level; the dose is expressed as a percentage of 3 r, the natural background dose in England. Thus the natural background itself appears as 100 per cent. Column 3 shows the dose as a percentage of 50 r, the presumed doubling dose; this is a necessary stage in the calculation. Column 4 shows the increase in the incidence of mutation disease over the present level which could be expected after 100 generations, if the source of radiation were to remain at its present level that long, expressed in afflicted live births per generation of 25 million births. I have chosen the yardstick of 25 million simply as a convenient measure based on the population of the United Kingdom. For weapon-test fall-out, a world-wide generation of say 1,300 million would perhaps be a better measure; a simple multiplication will give the appropriate figure for the world-wide incidence of genetic defect.

1 *Source of radiation*	2 *Percentage of 3 r, natural background level*	3 *Percentage of 50 r, the presumed doubling dose*	4 *Increase in incidence of mutation disease after 100 generations, if source continues at present level, expressed in terms of afflicted live births per generation of 25 million births*
Natural background, U.K.	100%	6%	None
Medical X-rays (British figure)	At least 22%	At least 1·32%	At least 6,600
Weapon-test fall-out:			
First American figure	8·3%	0·5%	2,500
Second American figure	3·32%	0·2%	1,000
British figure	1%	0·06%	300
Luminous watches and clocks. British figure	1%	0·06%	300

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A TABLE thus formulated has of course many disadvantages. Obviously none of these sources will remain at its present level for 100 generations; the whole calculation is cast in the conditional mood. It is a "would be" statement, and no other sort of statement is possible. It is also very partial and includes nothing for the industrial use of radio-active materials, where the genetic risk, though obviously small, is absolutely incalculable. Above all, there is no way of measuring the number of abortions, still-births, and sterilities, or the amount of general ill-health which ride iceberg-like below these figures of "afflicted live births." It may be worth reminding the reader at this stage that the table, and this whole article, concerns only the long-term genetic effects of radiation and has nothing to do with the immediate effects, on individuals now living, of, for instance, the build-up of the deadly strontium 90 in children's bones which is rightly attracting attention.

It has been particularly difficult to decide what figure for weapon-test fall-out to use. And thereby hangs a tale. The explanation of my three fall-out figures, "first American figure," "second American figure," and "British figure," is as follows. When the American Report was published, on June 13th, 1956, it gave the 30-year gonad dose from weapon-test fall-out at the rate of the last five years as 0·25 r, with a margin of error from 0·05 r to 1·25 r. But this issue of the Report was immediately withdrawn, and another put out, which gave, without explanation, a figure of 0·1 r, with a margin of error from 0·02 r to 0·5 r. The issues were in other respects identical, and in both issues the foreword was dated "June 4th." The *New York Times* précis of the Report on June 13th gave the first figure, 0·25 r, but a shorter précis published in the relevant supplement of the *New York Times* on Sunday, June 17th, gave, without explanation, the second figure, 0·1 r. Neither the scientists engaged on parallel work at Harwell nor indeed certain leading members of the American committee which wrote the Report itself were informed of this change. My own enquiries of the American National Academy of Sciences elicited at first a statement which spoke of a "misprint" in the first issue. It is quite clear from an examination of the relevant paragraph (the third whole paragraph on p. 22 of the Report) that there was no misprint, but a total change of this most crucial figure, complete with its margins of error. I have since enquired again through other channels and have been told that the second figure was a newer and better one, and that it was pasted over the earlier figure in most copies of the first issue, before the news conference. This conflicts with the fact that the *New York Times* published the earlier figure. I do not suggest that there has necessarily been any political pressure here, only that the matter was handled in a hurried and surreptitious way which very ill suits its importance.

The British Report gave 0·026 r and stuck to it. The discrepancy between this figure and even the lower American figure can be explained in part by the fact that atomic weapons are tested on American soil, in Nevada, and not on British. It may also be partly explained by the fact that the American figures are based on a continuation of tests at the level of the last five years (1951–5) and the British at the level of "the last few years." This may mean more than five; it is impossible to know. Both issues of the American Report say that if tests were continued at the level of the years 1953 and 1955, when they were at their highest, the figures would be twice as large. It is in any case worth noticing that nobody quoted the American figures at all in the Commons debate of last summer.

But I believe that neither the many ways of asking a question, nor the wide quantitative spread in the answers to any one way, nor hypotheses that are only relatively acceptable, nor necessary simplifications and omissions, nor even a feeling that the implications of the final figures (column 4) are not very serious, should prevent us from examining just what those implications are.

THE main practical purpose of the two large-scale enquiries in England and

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America was to advise governments and peoples whether the amount of radiation the ordinary citizen was receiving and could expect to receive was on genetic and other grounds "acceptable" or "reasonable," or even "permissible." There are two separate things here. There are, as I said earlier, already international and national "acceptable doses" for those especially exposed in industry and research. It is generally agreed that what is "acceptable" for a tiny minority would be very unacceptable indeed for the generality, because the radiation-induced mutations would not then be able to lose themselves in a larger population where fewer new mutations were arising. (The question of endogamy in exposed trades and localities does not seem to have been considered.) These two reports were thus taking the first steps towards determining an "acceptable" *general* level, and they concluded that there was no risk of such a level being exceeded for some time. But there is no doubt in anybody's mind about the difference between "acceptable" and "harmless." The American Report selects a general dose to the gonads of 10 r in 30 years, and is careful to describe it as "reasonable (not harmless)." This is a very clear phrase. H. J. Muller in the paper mentioned earlier gives reasons for believing that parents, who have for 15 years received the "permissible" dose for those in specially exposed trades of 15 r per year, will on average pass on one new mutation to each of their children.

The brute fact is that radiation causes idiocy, madness, deformity, abortion, sterility, and ill-health. More radiation will cause more idiocy, madness, deformity, abortion, sterility, and ill-health. It will cause them not to us, who have to decide how much more radiation to allow, but in mounting measure to our descendants. What should we do?

The problem of genetic damage from man-made radiation differs in some respects from any other which has ever faced mankind. In order to establish this, let us take two other problems which bear it a speciously close resemblance: motor accidents and soil erosion. A certain number of people are killed every year on the roads, and we can calculate that as more and more people achieve a car, so will more and more of them be killed. There is, as with radiation, a mounting total of harm from an otherwise desirable appurtenance of civilisation. But a man who is harmed in his car has himself benefited from his car, and in taking it out he knows the risk he is running. A pedestrian who is knocked down by a lorry carrying vegetables is perhaps full of the vegetables brought in by that very lorry twenty-four hours earlier. But a man who is harmed by a radiation-induced mutation has not benefited from the operation which produced it, and, if he could identify it, might disapprove of it; and then how can he assess the risk he runs, or act according to his assessment? The motorist knows that he *may be* one of this month's predictable total of road casualties; the carrier of a mutant knows (if he has the intelligence to know anything) that he *is* one of the casualties which were ineluctably determined long before he was born. With radiation we harm posterity; with cars we only harm ourselves.

The farmers who laid waste the Dust Bowl in the United States caused unavoidable harm to posterity as we are now doing with radiation. But they did not wholly understand what they were doing, and we do. Moreover, the damage done by soil erosion can be slowly repaired; genetic damage can not. We should also bear in mind posterity's judgment on the Dust Bowl farmers.

It is in the last resort this certainty of the result which differentiates the problem from others. Always hitherto, and in all other matters now, if a man has said, "Don't let's do this, it will hurt our descendants," another has been able to say, "Nonsense," and to argue his case pretty well. There has been no certainty. Debate rages, and democracy thrives. But this is not so of radiation.

Let us take the thing in reverse. You will often hear historical conservatives say, "We are suffering from the effects of the French Revolution, or the break-up of the Austrian Empire" (or whatever it may be), and blame Robespierre or Woodrow Wilson. But when

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they do, they are attacked at once from two sides. Other historical conservatives will say, "Nonsense! We are suffering from . . ."—anything from the Yalta Conference to the Fall, and blame anybody from Alger Hiss to the Serpent himself. Radicals, on the other hand, will say, "Nonsense! We are suffering, as usual, from our own failings, and have only ourselves to blame." Argument will rage, and it will not be decided, because these are true differences of temperament, not pseudo-differences about fact, in which one view is right and the other is wrong. Now let us move the scene forward a few hundred years, and consider what our descendants will say. They will say, "We are suffering because X years ago our ancestors permitted X radiation, and Y years Y radiation, and Z, Z." They will know more then about the quantities involved, but they cannot be more certain than us about the terms. And will anybody be able to contradict them? Will not all temperaments agree?

We are facing for the first time in the history of humanity an equation between the good and the harm which will be done to posterity by a given activity, about the nature of whose "harm" term there can be no doubt. Let us now consider the "good" term. The harm which comes from increased radiation is all of a piece: idiocy, sterility, etc. as stated earlier. But the good which comes from the various activities involving increased radiation is diverse. These activities are radiology, the industrial use of radio-active substances, luminous watches, research, and atomic weapons.

RADIOLOGY is used for three things: for diagnosis, for healing, and for convenience. X-rays are the easiest method of diagnosis in many fields, and have largely supplanted older and more skilled and complex methods. Indeed there is one crusty old doctor in England now who has become famous for his tireless advocacy of the view that radiology has already caused a great traditional body of skill to be lost; skill in listening, feeling, measuring by eye. It looks as though we had better begin to recover it. There remain, of course, cases where a diagnosis can only be made by X-ray. Only the individual doctor can weigh the genetic harm against the diagnostic good, and it is to be hoped that he will increasingly do so. X-rays for healing are mainly used for cancer, and cancer patients are usually beyond the reproductive age. When they are, no question of genetic harm arises. When they are not, indeed when radio-therapy is used for any condition on a person who may still be a parent, it is again a question for the doctor's own conscience. X-rays are used for convenience in shoe-shops, when you see if the shoe fits, and of course stay there twiddling your toes for a bit because it looks nice. The only conceivable use for these machines is for children who are too young to tell you if the shoe pinches or not. The Medical Research Council recommends a reduction in their use, but would not a prohibition be better? Many pregnant women are also X-rayed for convenience. It is very easy to stretch a "necessary pelvimetry" to cover a wish to find out if there are going to be twins, or even to be able to say, "Look! Little Johnny's first portrait." Here again it is the doctor's responsibility, and a very heavy one, since such X-rays fall directly on the genes which are waiting in the ovaries to form later children, besides, of course, falling on the gonads of the unborn child.

The industrial use of radio-active substances is perhaps the most difficult "good" term in these equations. Atomic power will get cheaper as coal and oil get dearer. We shall be able to do things with it which we were never able to do with coal and oil. The good is obviously going to be great and varied, and probably many good effects will crop up which we cannot now foresee. On the other side of the equation, the harm is more readily controllable in this field than in the others. The main problem is how to get rid of radio-active wastes from nuclear reactors. The important thing here is the degree of toxicity of the many substances in the wastes. Some have a half-life measured in days; you just keep them for a few weeks, and then they have decayed enough to be

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safely discharged anywhere you like. Others have a very long half-life, centuries sometimes, but these have only a low radio-activity and toxicity, and can, according to present ideas, be safely discharged into the sea. But there is an awkward middle group of the particularly deadly radio-strontium and radio-caesium, which have a half-life of about thirty years. At present these are stored in liquid concentrate in "cup and saucer" tanks, a form of storage which shows at once if there is a leak from the "cup" to the "saucer." In time it may be difficult to find enough room for all the tanks. But a way has been found at Harwell of baking them into ceramic blocks which can be perfectly safely stored anywhere, because the radio-activity stays imprisoned for ever. For instance, they could simply be dropped down disused coalmines, which would be a satisfyingly neat piece of ecology when we need no more coal. Discharge into the sea, on the other hand, even of only slightly radio-active wastes, is open to objection. Even if you inject the wastes down to great depths, they may still come up again. Oceanographers do not yet know for sure what are the "flushing times" of different bits of the sea; that is to say, the time it takes for the water at the bottom to come up to the top. It is often centuries, but some radio-isotopes are still going strong after centuries. And then it would only need some get-rich-quick enterprise or government to pipe highly radio-active waste into the sea to make just one of those little additions to the total radiation which will join with other little mistakes, little accidents, little irresponsibilities, to blast the life of some unimaginable family on the other side of the earth. Disposal by sea is a problem which can only be tackled internationally.

Luminous watches. Well! Their share of the harm is tiny, but their usefulness is even tinier. Here, as with the shoe-shop X-ray, it is hard to see why the Medical Research Council confined itself to a recommended "reduced as far as possible," rather than an outright prohibition.

Research. The waste from reactors used for research should, of course, be treated just like the waste from any other reactor. But research should be allowed a greater latitude (if it needs it) than any other radiation-producing activity, because the good it may do is potentially greater than the good any other may do. In particular, it may lead to ways of reducing the amount of radiation liberated by a given activity, or even of reducing the amount of genetic damage done by a given amount of radiation.

I HAVE kept atomic weapons till last for the obvious reasons. So far I have only mentioned peacetime tests, but here we must widen the issue. We test these bombs to see if they work. We want to know that they work, and show our rivals that they work, in order that our rivals shall know what to expect if they drop one on us. We, the Americans and British, think we are not prepared to drop the first hydrogen bomb. But we think the Russians may be. The Russians think they are not prepared to, but think that we may be. If we widen the field still further and instead of "we, the British," etc., speak of "we, mankind," we find that mankind is prepared to drop hydrogen bombs. We, mankind, are prepared. We are prepared to only in certain circumstances, but the qualification has less force than the statement. If "demonstrable untruth" means anything, it would be a demonstrable untruth to say, "We, mankind, are not prepared to drop hydrogen bombs." The demonstration is that we are making and testing them. I hope it is not necessary to say that I don't hold we are inevitably going to drop bombs because we are testing them, only that we are prepared to.

Now the *immediate* consequences of dropping a hydrogen bomb on a populous place would be very terrible; they would be far the most terrible of any act of war which had ever been committed. But I suggest they would only be quantitatively the most terrible, not qualitatively. Children and helpless non-combatants have been killed and maimed in thousands by TNT. They would be killed and maimed in millions by hydrogen bombs. But the *delayed genetic* effects would be terrible in a different way, quali-

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tatively. The women and children who are killed and maimed by TNT or by the immediate action of an atomic bomb, are killed and maimed in a certain sense by their own consent. This is brutal, but it is necessary to establish a hard ground before we proceed to this qualitative distinction. A nation decides to go to war by its customary political procedure. The women may have the vote, in which case their elected leaders choose to expose them to TNT bombing. Or they may not have the vote, in which case they are assumed, brutally but logically, to accept the customarily expressed judgment of the society which regulates their lives in all respects, after influencing it as best they can through their husbands. Or the nation may not be a democracy at all, but a dictatorship. If the dictator wishes to go to war and the people do not, his enemy will be better employed in fomenting a revolt and getting rid of him than in accepting his invitation to war. And whatever the political structure of the nation, the children and the helpless are subject to the decision of their rulers whether they shall be bombed, just as they are in all other matters. A child's life is one long consent. This rough and ready argument is borne out by the fact that we do fight, and fight hard, and that when women and children are killed we accept it with grief, but not with shame, as part of the just price for achieving the object of our war. We consent to our own suffering, and we have the right so to consent.

But what right have we to consent to the suffering of those who will be born a hundred generations hence? If you were to drop a hydrogen bomb on an inhabited place, the genetic damage would be enormously higher than anything we have yet been considering. Many people would survive and have children after a dose of 400 r to the gonads, and the "reasonable (not harmless)" dose advanced in the American report is 10 r. Beyond that, for hundreds of miles downwind and for years afterwards, the earth would be so contaminated as to leave a continuing dose high above this "reasonable" figure. Generations hence the healthy would look at the imbecile, the mad, and the deformed, and would try to remember what it was all about. Let us try to imagine our own feelings if we were to look at our first child, a deformed idiot, and realise that this was perhaps because of the Mogul invasions of India, or perhaps the war between the Beaker People and the Windmill Hill People, or perhaps even something we know about, like the Thirty Years War.

If atomic warfare in its genetic aspect is qualitatively different from other warfare, it is only quantitatively different from other activities which increase radiation. It must, therefore, be brought within the good-harm equation. The harm is as usual, but the good is subject to all the uncertainties which habitually hang about the morality of war; shall we achieve what we hold good by winning or succumb to what we hold bad by losing? What about the fact that what seems good to us seems bad to the other side? I do not think that there is any such thing as a "just war." If the aims of one side are just, must not the aims of the other side be unjust? Must not the aims which are pursued in a given war be just and unjust in equal proportions? Ruritania may wage a just war on Paphlagonia, but the aims pursued in the Ruritano-Paphlagonian War, lumped together in one whole, will be morally neutral. Nevertheless, the fact that there has been a war at all, as opposed to peaceful negotiation, is bad. All this is true of all war, but it is not true, for instance, of atomic power and X-rays. In atomic power and X-rays, we are balancing harm against good. The eventual sufferers from an atomic war, whom we cannot consult, would probably care as little for our claims and counter-claims of justice as we now care about the Thirty Years War.

If all this is true, then we are faced for the first time with a type of warfare in which we harm those whose consent can be derived from no political or moral theory. But political and moral theories are devised to describe and regulate possible actions. This particular action has only just become possible, and it therefore falls outside existing political and

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moral theories. If we describe the harm it does in terms of existing theories, we find that it is terrible in nature, within wide limits uncertain in extent, and irreversible. But those who will suffer it are unable to consent to it, and uniquely so, since they do not exist. When they do, they will hold different political and moral views from ours. The countervailing good we do is wholly ambiguous and uncertain. But what is such an action? Is it not a crime? To say that no analogy with familiar crimes holds good is merely to repeat that the action is new. To say that it has not been declared a crime by any legislature is to repeat again that the action is new. What legislature, if squarely asked, "Is such an action a crime?" could answer, "No"? To say that it has no name is to repeat a third time that it is new. Analogies with other crimes may be found by more diligent enquirers than me, but if this article does nothing else, it can at elast suggest a name for it: "Prolicide," from the Latin *proles*, offspring.

In testing hydrogen bombs, we are preparing to commit the crime of prolicide. (We, mankind, of course.) If the good-harm equation for atomic warfare is as I described it earlier, then the good-harm equation for preparing atomic warfare is the same. But there is something to add. In testing nuclear weapons, we are already increasing the radiation level, and we have to add this into the harm side of the scales. We are already committing prolicide. We are doing remote harm in order to enable ourselves to commit an action which would on the one hand do very much more remote harm, and on the other would give rise to what would be considered an immediate good by half the world and an immediate harm by the other half. But the people on whom the remote and certain harm will fall will be the descendants of both halves of the world.

It is, I think, generally agreed by those who have studied the matter and whose breadth of vision extends beyond the end of their own noses that an atomic war is to be avoided at all costs. If the reasoning which I have advanced holds good, it tends to the conclusion that the testing of atomic weapons should be abandoned not only because it is a preparation for something which is to be avoided at all costs, and is therefore idiotic, but also because in itself it is morally intolerable.

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Two poems by Charles Causley

Death of an Aircraft

An incident of the Cretan campaign, 1941
(*to George Psychoundakis*)

ONE day on our village in the month of July
An aeroplane sank from the sea of the sky,
White as a whale it smashed on the shore
Bleeding oil and petrol all over the floor.

The Germans advanced in the splintering heat
To save the dead plane from the people of Crete,
And round the glass wreck in a circus of snow
Set seven mechanical sentries to go.

Seven stalking spiders about the sharp sun
Clicking like clockwork and each with a gun,
But at *Come to the Cookhouse* they wheeled about
And sat down to sausages and sauerkraut.

Down from the mountain burning so brown
Wriggled three heroes from Kastelo town,
Deep in the sand they silently sank
And each struck a match for a petrol-tank.

Up went the plane in a feather of fire
As the bubbling boys began to retire
And, grey in the guardhouse, seven Berliners
Lost their stripes as well as their dinners.

Down in the village, at murder-stations,
The Germans fell in friends and relations:
But not a Kastelian snapped an eye
As he spat in the air and prepared to die.

Not a Kastelian whispered a word
Dressed with the dust to be massacred,
And squinted up at the sky with a frown
As three bubbly boys came walking down.

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One was sent to the county gaol
Too young for bullets if not for bail,
  But the other two were in prime condition
  To take on a load of ammunition.

In Archontiki they stood in the weather
Naked, hungry, chained together:
  Stark as the stones in the market-place,
  Under the eyes of the populace.

Their irons unlocked as their naked hearts
They faced the squad and their funeral-carts.
  The Captain cried, "Before you're away
  Is there any last word you'd like to say?"

"I want no words," said one, "with my lead,
Only some water to cool my head."
  "Water," the other said, "is all very fine
  But I'll be taking a glass of wine.

A glass of wine for the afternoon
With permission to sing a signature-tune!"
  And he ran the *raki* down his throat
  And took a deep breath for the leading note.

But before the squad could shoot or say
Like the impala he leapt away
  Over the rifles, under the biers,
  The bullets rattling round his ears.

"Run!" they cried to the boy of stone
Who now stood there in the street alone,
  But, "Rather than bring revenge on your head
  It is better for me to die," he said.

The soldiers turned their machine-guns round
And shot him down with a dreadful sound,
  Scrubbed his face with perpetual dark
  And rubbed it out like a pencil mark.

But his comrade slept in the olive tree
And sailed by night on the gnawing sea,
  The soldier's silver shilling earned
  And, armed like an archangel, returned.

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Timothy Winters

TIMOTHY WINTERS comes to school
With eyes as wide as a football-pool,
Ears like bombs and teeth like splinters:
A blitz of a boy is Timothy Winters.

His belly is white, his neck is dark,
And his hair is an exclamation-mark.
His clothes are enough to scare a crow
And through his britches the blue winds blow.

When teacher talks he won't hear a word
And he shoots down dead the arithmetic-bird,
He licks the patterns off his plate
And he's not even heard of the Welfare State.

Timothy Winters has bloody feet
And he lives in a house in Suez Street,
He sleeps in a sack on the kitchen floor
And they say there aren't boys like him any more.

Old man Winters likes his beer
And his missus ran off with a bombardier,
Grandma sits in the grate with a gin
And Timothy's dosed with an aspirin.

The Welfare Worker lies awake
But the law's as tricky as a ten-foot snake,
So Timothy Winters drinks his cup
And slowly goes on growing up.

At Morning Prayers the Headmaster helves
For children less fortunate than ourselves,
And the loudest response in the room is when
Timothy Winters roars "Amen!"

So come one angel, come on ten:
Timothy Winters says "Amen
Amen amen amen amen."

Timothy Winters, Lord.

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Dwight Macdonald / REFLECTIONS

SMOKING is expensive (especially in England, where cigarettes cost twice as much as in the States), dirty (those stale ashtrays, and that stalest ashtray of all, one's mouth), and unhealthy (lung cancer, and it doesn't help my asthma either). Why, then, have I been smoking one or more packs of cigarettes a day for some thirty years? Some say a cigarette relaxes their nerves; I have never felt the slightest narcotic or any other effect from smoking, possibly because I have never learned to inhale. Some appear to find the taste of one or another brand or kind of tobacco pleasant; I can distinguish Virginia tobacco from Turkish but that's all; one brand tastes just the same as another to me, and I don't like the taste of any of them. Why, then? The social advantages of smoking are obvious: relieves embarrassment (and boredom) by giving the hands and mouth something to do; provides cover—a shooting-box or a fox-hole, depending on one's mood and temperament—against The Other (or The Others). But why do I smoke when I am alone—walking, working? I have decided it is connected with time, that the charm of smoking is that each lighting-up—and, to a lesser extent, each taking-up-putting-between-lips-and-puffing—makes a small but new beginning. One has the feeling of "starting all over," of all possibilities still being freshly, gloriously open. One goes back to the beginning, before things took their contrary course, defying one's intentions. As with a released convict, the Slate is Wiped Clean and one is given a Fresh Start—or, more accurately, the illusion of such. A cigarette has another chronological aspect; it marks the passage of time: the lighting, puffing, and extinguishing constitute a series of actions in time that have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and so give one a sense of form and rhythm and so of the reclamation, in a rather small way it is true, of some of the formless wilderness of time. This is why one feels more "real" when one smokes, and why among the heaviest smokers are soldiers (who live either in terror or in boredom, both disorderly situations in which the tiny amount of form a cigarette can give to time is a help) or writers, who live, when they are writing at least, in a miserable blend of terror *and* boredom.

HUNGARY 1956—*Three Footnotes to History*: (1) "The Russians made just three demands [at their first meeting with Pal Maleter, Nagy's late Minister of Defence]: the restoration of destroyed Red Army memorials, a guarantee that the resting-places of Soviet soldiers would in future be respected by the Hungarians, and finally that the Soviet Army when leaving Hungary should be accorded full military honours." (*The Reporter*, December 13th.) (2) "A Hungarian soldier-refugee said the Russian soldiers who entered his home town kept repeating, 'Canal, canal.' So the Hungarians led them to a Danube canal. 'No, no,' said the Russians. 'Bigger canal—with English and French.'" (*N.Y. Times*, November 11th.) (3) "On the Buda side, a workman was blotting out the coloured emblems of the Hungarian People's Democracy. 'We are no longer a people's democracy; we want to be a real democracy,' one citizen explained." (London *Times*, November 1st.)

DURING a recent showing of *Guys and Dolls* in Brentwood, Marlon Brando and the other actors suddenly began to speak Italian. A reel of the Italian-language version had got mixed in by accident. The manager apologised from the stage, but he found that most of the audience hadn't noticed anything. "They thought it was just the way Brando speaks." Six or seven years ago much the same thing happened in one of Bob Hope's radio broadcasts. He used to warm up with three minutes of solo jokes and patter, but this time he mislaid his script. So he improvised three minutes of double-talk—the ostensible beginnings of jokes but no resolution—delivering it all in his cus-

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tomary rapid-fire style and taking care to use his typical climatic inflection whenever he came to the non-point of the un-joke. Nobody noticed any difference: the audience in the studio laughed uproariously, and no complaints came in from his vast listening public. Intrigued and somewhat uneasy, Hope tried it again several times, always with the same result. He is said to have been quite depressed about it.

These episodes suggest that the manufacturers of mass culture have established the same sort of ascendancy over their customers as Pavlov did over his dogs in his famous demonstration of the conditioned reflex. He rang a bell and then fed the dogs; after a while, they salivated the moment the bell rang even if no food followed. The symbol (the bell) had become so closely associated with the reality (food) for which it originally stood that the same effect (salivation) was produced by the symbol as by the reality. Brando's trademarked face and personality led his Brentwood fans to associate a certain kind of dialogue with it and they supplied it themselves when the sound-track failed to; Hope has so conditioned his public to associate his inflections with something funny that they have come to respond just to the inflections. This also explains how Americans can be got to insist on one brand of soap or beer or cigarettes as against a dozen others indistinguishable from it except by that little bell that keeps ringing in the ads. Not to mention how Communists can be induced to salivate, when the Hungarian revolution is mentioned, by a whole glockenspiel of abuse—"bourgeois," "fascist," "Horthyite," "imperialist," "counter-revolutionary," etc. And certainly not to mention those true-born Englishmen who thought they had dined off Patriotism, Honour, and International Law & Order at Suez.

AMATEUR though I am of amateur journalism *à l'anglais*, I must admit it can be carried too far. The December 16th *Observer*, for instance, had a front-page scoop, by their Hungarian expert, Lajos Lederer: "RUSSIANS DESERT IN HUNGARY/Troops Join Freedom Fighters." Mr. Lederer (whose earlier accounts of the fighting had seemed to me richer in sentiment than information) described "a large-scale revolt of Soviet troops" and stated that "the number of organised units in revolt by the weekend was estimated at 15,000, of which the largest number have joined the Hungarian forces." This was good news, too good to be true, in fact, since, taking a "unit" as being at least two men, it would mean 30,000 (plus) Soviet soldiers "in revolt"—i.e. going over with their arms to fight for the other side. The rest of the press had nothing on Mr. Lederer's "large-scale revolt" for the next six days, and so I was not too surprised to find him, in the December 23rd issue, climbing down, but I must admit the way he executed the operation rather shook me. "Last week's reports of large-scale desertions . . . have since been confirmed from other sources," he began blandly, then abruptly reversed his field, "but it now appears that the figure of 15,000 Soviet soldiers involved was an exaggerated estimate by freedom fighters in one area who generalised their experiences." The "15,000" figure was thus (a) reduced from "units" to "soldiers" without explanation, and (b) revealed to have been arrived at by what the sociologists call "uncritical extrapolation," or simply assuming the part is typical of the whole. I am afraid there are virtues, after all, in the professional approach.

READING in the daily press about something one has first-hand knowledge about is like looking in the fun-park's distorting mirror. A brisk formula, cocksure and cut-and-dried, has been imposed on reality, and one finds little connection between what one has experienced and these Fleet Street hieroglyphs. A week after I got back from Cairo, the *Daily Mail* (November 26th) printed the first report of its newly-released Cairo man, Julian De Kassell, giving it enormous front-page headlines: "CAIRO 'HATE BRITISH' ORGY/Customs Men Force Our Women to Strip/'Be Brutal' Order Goes Out." Although its author, whom I had met in the Metropolitan bar (which somehow made it all the more unsettling), had been interned with the other British journalists in the Semiramis Hotel for three weeks before he had left Egypt, he seemed to have a very clear idea of what had been happening: "Colonel Nasser is now more confident, more triumphant than at any time since Britain and France intervened in Egypt," Mr. De Kassell began confidently and triumphantly—a real *coup* of long-distance psychoanalysis, that!—and then reeled on: "Nasser has no intention of ever allowing Britain to return to her Suez Canal base. . . . The base is in danger of being seized by the Russians. . . . This is the real significance of what is happening now in Cairo. . . . This is the full uncensored story of Egypt." The real inside, lowdown, uncensored, horse's-mouth, now-it-can-be-told story proved to be an unstable compound of facts which weren't facts, at least by my own observation (though of course I was at a disadvantage in being able to move about freely), and of facts which were facts but didn't mean what they were said to mean. Examples of the first: (1) "In the Cairo streets there is an increasing number of cars bearing the Russian flag." I didn't see any, nor did I hear of any; and why would the Russians be lunatic enough to put flags on their cars anyway? (2) "Permission is needed to move from one town to

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another." I moved from Cairo to Luxor and back without permission. Example of the second: "Egypt is moving toward the complete police state. Police are everywhere. Censorship and a blackout are imposed strictly." The first statement is true, but surely the police were "everywhere" because of the war crisis, to protect foreigners against possible mob attack (which would have been awkward for Nasser); the censorship had been lifted last summer and was reimposed after the war began; the blackout was because British planes were bombing Egypt, a fact that perhaps escaped Mr. De Kassell's unpiercing eye. As for the stripping of "our women," and what a nice bit of appeal to the mass-psyche *that* vignette is, the story alleges that English women were forced to undress "in a little uncurtained room" through the windows of which "grinning Egyptians kept peering in"; I don't know first-hand if this happened or not, but I did see in the papers later quite different accounts—i.e. some women did have to undress, but there were matrons in charge and the windows were curtained. Finally, in all this inside lowdown story, there is no mention of the remarkable fact that not a single foreigner was attacked by a mob during the whole period, and that most of us, French, British, or American, were surprised at the friendliness of the people. All this was truth, but it wasn't news, not *Daily Mail* news at least.

PROFESSOR Reinhard Bendix writes, apropos my note last December on the suppression of his paper by the International Sociological Association lest it offend the Soviet delegation: "One additional new point may be of interest. I have recently been informed that the ISA receives a subsidy from UNESCO. Therefore, it is not only a question of Marshall's dual rôle [see p. 59 December issue—D.M.] but also of the whole relationship between a United Nations agency and an international scholarly association." I wonder how many other scholarly and artistic organisations are getting subsidies from UNESCO, and whether these subsidies exert pressure toward treating certain subjects diplomatically rather than truthfully. (I also wonder why anyone thought it was a good idea to start UNESCO in the first place.)

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THE OTHER EGYPT
—NOTES OF A TOURIST

VISITING the remains of Pharaohnic Egypt is a trip to the moon; impressive, but no connection; only the Mayan ruins seem as alien. While I was in Cairo, waiting for the Eden-Mollet filibustering adventure to become history (of a sort), I went out to the Pyramids and the Sphinx—there are others but these are *the* ones—spent a morning in the Cairo Museum, and two days at the vast Luxor-Karnak-Thebes complex of tombs and temples. Sightseeing conditions were ideal: there was nobody else about. No riders for the rows of undulating camels and nervous Arabian horses in the sheds near the Pyramids; no tourists, except me, to disturb the millennial hush of Karnak; a scant dozen guests in the huge pink Winter Palace Hotel at Luxor, whose corridors are as wide as some London streets, eating in silence in the blacked-out cavern of a dining-room by flickering candles; no one else unpacking his box lunch at the Thomas Cook Rest House across the river; no other buyers for the real-genuine-antique carved fragments offered me with dramatic furtiveness—real real-genuine-antiques belong to the State—for three pounds, two, one, sixty piastres, forty, okay twenty (four shillings); nobody else to be ferried across the Nile by the grizzled Sudanese boatman in his tattered, catastrophic craft at a *prix fixe* of fifteen piastres the round trip, the boat waiting all day for my return, making his total earnings for the day (including my ten-piastre tip) five shillings. It is a weighty responsibility to be The Last Tourist. Also expensive: one is the only visible means of support, the only cash customer, the only source of tips, the sole target of all the highly skilled extractors of small sums that lurk, like *piranha* fish in a Brazilian stream, in the crevices of every Egyptian ruin; while each bite is minute, they come so fast and many as to reduce one's wallet to a skeleton in a surprisingly short time.

THE PYRAMIDS AND THE SPHINX. The oldest and greatest trademarks ever devised are twenty minutes by bus from downtown Cairo. They are technically in the desert, or at least on the edge of it, but it's not at all like the postcards. One of Farouk's "rest-houses"—its courtyard has been turned into a public picnic ground—squats like a great brown toad literally in the shadow of the Great Pyramid. (It has been left as he left it, with its granite desk, translucent hollow alabaster columns with red lights inside them—sunset in the abattoir—and other expensive vulgarities open for public inspection at ten piastres a ticket.) Although the Sphinx and the Great Pyramid are surrounded by genuine authentic Egyptian sand, the whole area has been ravaged by the archæologists, whose excavations give an effect more like a new sewer project than the eternal mystery of the desert. The Great Pyramid survives all this, rearing up majestically in shelving tiers over one's head, ocean-vast. (But it is the detached awe one feels before Niagara or

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the Grand Canyon, not the thrill of sympathy communicated by the works of man.) The Sphinx doesn't survive its squalid ambience. A village has grown up in front of it; the archæologists have diligently uncovered its clumsy, botched-together brick body which detracts from the effect of the head; a Coca Cola stand has ventured within a hundred yards of its right paw. Like so many monuments of ancient Egypt, including the Pyramids, the Sphinx is picturesque rather than beautiful, imposing because of its scale and hence best seen from afar. The back of its head, for instance, is a smooth round bowl, childish and graceless, more like a haystack than a head; the face is undeniably large but crude and trivial—the Mamelukes improved it by using it as a target for artillery practice; all its celebrated mystery comes from those scarred eyes, that shattered nose. . . . My visit was made pleasant by an elderly guide, agile and erect in his dark blue robes, who captured me with his opening line, under the Great Pyramid: "Shall we go to the top, sar? I took Professor Mark Twain, long time back, 1905 I think, he put me in his book, Mohammed Ali." He also claimed to have been chief hunting guide for Kitchener, Cromer, and Lawrence. I believed him. Or wanted to. I was determined to get *some* sense of the past from the place.

LUXOR-KARNAK-THEBES. An overnight trip from Cairo, £16 first-class round-trip, extremely comfortable sleeper. . . . Luxor temple, on the Nile bank, built between 1500 and 1350 B.C. by Amenhotep III and Ramses II, is practically an annex of the Winter Palace Hotel; a twenty-minute carriage-ride away is Karnak, a half-mile-square jumble of temples begun by the Pharaohs of the Twelfth Dynasty (*circa* 3000 B.C.) and added to every now and then by their successors, all the way down to the Ptolemies; since the time of Breasted, Karnak has been the colonial sphere-of-interest of the University of Chicago, whose archæologists, operating from a compound on the outskirts of the town, are still digging up parts of the great jigsaw puzzle and patching them together; as with their university's sociological tradition, the results are impressive quantitatively rather than qualitatively; and finally, across the river, is the even vaster necropolis of Thebes, hundreds of temples and tombs scattered for miles along the edge of the desert. . . . The general effect is a series of bombed and roofless museums. Like Cairo, it looks best from a distance, the strange sloping bulks of the pylons rearing up through palm trees, the coarseness of detail merging into awkward grandeur. . . . The ruins are an ugly yellow-brown, the original granite, limestone, sandstone, or marble being coated with several thousand years of dust. Photographs don't show this. . . . They also minimise the dilapidation by selecting the better-preserved details and vistas. The columns are battered, chipped, with often great holes gouged out; the statues are usually headless or with smashed features. One is appalled by the fury of destruction evident everywhere, like a shriek still resounding down the centuries; the colossal statue of Ramses II, weighing 1,000 tons, the nose bigger than a man, lies in scores of fragments in the grass, shattered as if by dynamite; in a niche far at the back of an underground tomb, dark and lost, someone has patiently hacked away at the seated statues of a noble and his wife until only the scarred outlines remain on the wall, like shadows; some of this devastation was done at the order of later Pharaohs, jealous of their predecessors, some by idol-hating early Christians, some by Persians, Romans, Arabs. . . . A few things give pleasure: the great Lotus columns at Karnak, as majestic and mysterious as in those romantic early Victorian engravings (which give a better idea, by the way, of Egypt than do most photographs); the handsome inner court of the Ramses III temple at Medinet Habu; the coloured ceilings at Karnak and the gay painted walls of Der El-Bahri; the two seated colossi of Memnon, whose hooded, obliterated heads brood over the green fields*; one or two of the tombs of the kings where harmonious colour and design have got the better of ritual needs; a few sculptures, such as a delicate-featured wife of a Pharaoh at Luxor (she is one-sixth his size, scale being always related to status and not to either art or reality). . . . But the general impression is at best fantastic, at worst grotesque. As, the senseless repetition—why is a mile of sphinxes more beautiful than a single one? Why repeat the same colossal statue of Ramses III in front of *every one* of a dozen pillars? The effect is not rhythmical—as with repeated simple patterns like the egg and dart—because each item is complicated, full of distracting details. It is just overpowering, like a great deal of money. And the mass production! Those ram-headed sphinxes

* One of them is the celebrated "Singing Memnon" of the ancients, Juvenal's "*Dimidio magicae resonant ubi Memnone chordae*," which was said to give forth musical strains at sunrise; ordinary tourists heard only one note, or none at all, but it greeted celebrities, like the emperor Hadrian, with two and even three performances. Modern investigators think the sound was either a priestly trick (there is a suspicious cavity in the lap, big enough to hide a man) or was produced by the expansive action of the hot sun on the night-chilled stone blocks. Nobody any longer thinks it was magic, and so the statue sings no more.

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at Karnak, crudely carved by journeymen following a standard design, and an atrocious one—each kneeling sphinx has a small human figure (if one can call any of these stiff, one-dimensional statues human) wedged between its knees, awkwardly placed and out of scale. . . . These people were not artists, their minds were at once too literal and too abstract. . . . *Too abstract*: their art—there are exceptions, of course, especially in the earliest dynasties—lacks sensuous feeling for form and colour; its primary aim is intellectual: to convey an abstract meaning; buildings are treated not as masses or even as surfaces to be decorated but rather as books, as blackboards; every wall, every pylon, even most columns, are written on, covered with hieroglyphs, that strange mixture of art and alphabet, or with bas-reliefs that are not decorative—that is, not adapted to the area they cover—but communicative, monotonously the same in their standardised elements, and designed merely to put on record the Pharaoh's triumphs—to "get it down in writing.". . . *Too literal*: in another sense, they were unable to get far enough away from life to create art; the carved and painted victories, slaves, food, wives, sports, divine relations of the Pharaoh were thought of not as symbols but as actually accompanying him into the next world to reproduce literally all the elements of his grandeur in this one; there is something compulsive about this frenetic, ceaseless talking from every surface about himself, with hardly ever a blank space (a silence). . . . The Egyptians were the first *graffiti* artists. Instead of "Tony loves Mae" they scrawled on their walls "Isis loves Ramses.". . . . Re *graffiti*: they range from the chiselled comments of Roman travellers to the latest Cook's tourist; twelve feet up on a column at Medinet Habu is cut, in the elegant lettering of the period: "Sir B. and Lady Chichester, Jan 4 1844"; America is also in the running—a few courtyards away a lintel is neatly inscribed "H. H. Humphrey, Jan. 7, 1840, Boston, USA.". . . The brutality of the message often matches that of the art—those endless rows of kneeling captives, arms tied behind them, the trunk ending at the neck, painted along the walls of the tomb of Ramses VI. Also disturbing are the people merging into animals and vice versa, as the columns in Queen Hatshepsut's rock-temple at Der El-Bahri in which her head, forming the capital, has the eyes and ears of a cow (to indicate her descent from Hathor, the cow-headed goddess). This temple, incidentally, looks stunning in photographs taken from a distance, being dramatically terraced into the cliffside, but on closer inspection the stone-work proves to be heavily restored and to resemble nothing so much as a row of shower-stalls. . . . Human use or enjoyment, even the human vanity implied in trying to impress the spectator—these were not the object of all this building, carving, painting. In fact, the spectator is literally excluded. The temples were shut off from view behind high brick walls, and only the priests were allowed to enter. The tombs of the kings, rabbit-holes hundreds of feet long cut into the crumbling desert hills, broadening out at intervals into spacious underground chambers, were richly decorated, crammed with treasures, and then sealed up for ever and the entrances carefully hidden. But greedy sight-seeing humanity soon began to ferret out the concealed entrances, to loot and gape; a dozen or so were well-known to Greek and Roman tourists; in the twenties, only a few hundred yards from tombs famous since antiquity, Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon opened up the still intact tomb of Tutankhamun; and today there are electric lights and guide-rails. . . . The drive to the tombs winds up through desolation of desolation, hills of crumbling rock glowing palely against the intense blue sky, no plants, birds, insects (except one butterfly), the flinty shards drained of colour by the brilliant brutal sun, oppressively hot even in November. In these ash-heaps, the ancient Egyptians, believers not in the divine right of kings but in the literal divinity of kings, buried their god-rulers; worshippers of the life-giving sun, they chose this place where light is death; materialists and ascetics at the same time, they lapped their kings in gold, surrounded them with treasures real and symbolic, and then raked the cindery rubble over them as if they were pariah dogs. . . . Yet life keeps breaking through. They forgot about tourists—and guides. There was the nice old one at Luxor who deftly parried my "I don't want a guide" with a reproachful, "I no guide. I be guardian here." But, although he confidently showed me Alexander the Great's bathroom and was equally positive about who had wrecked the temple ("The Roman when he come here he break all the statues"), his knowledge was mostly the usual, "Here God Ra welcome King Amenhotep, say he his good son." . . . Apropos guides, it occurs to me that they may be the first Egyptians for thousands of years to get into the driver's seat: "Come along now, sar, I show you——" One comes.

THE CAIRO MUSEUM. Mysterious sign at the ticket window: "The Clerk is Not Obliged to Give Change." Unmysterious sign inside: "Many Diseases Are Spread by Spitting/*therefore*/PLEASE DO NOT SPIT.". . . The guards not the usual elderly pensioners but restless young policemen, in white uniforms with blue berets, all with pistols, many with rifles also. . . .

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A great barn of a place, cluttered and musty and badly lit; only the Tutankhamun treasures are displayed with any showmanship. Most exhibits are not marked, and some that are remain enigmatic: "Limestone head of a woman, of very fine work. Although it is often published as one of the finest examples of New Kingdom work, some consider, and with a certain amount of reason, that it is a forgery." The museum is a vast attic: the Egyptian climate preserves everything, so that one gets masses of trivial, ugly objects that elsewhere are allowed to vanish decently after a few centuries; as in an attic, one is at once fascinated by the preservation of so much long-dead trivia and depressed by their lack of interest. Like Swift's Struldbugs, Egypt is cursed with immortality. Ex.: the rows and rows, twenty to a row, of practically identical stone or clay foot-high mummy-effigies from Tutankhamun's tomb. Ex.: those hideous mummy cases, built like Michigan State tackles and decorated with dreary gaudiness. And one gets very tired of statues of mummies with crossed arms. The idea of a statue of a dead person is *echt*-Egyptian; it is easier to freeze in stone a corpse than a live body and so much of this sculpture is frozen stiff (with terror?). . . . They seem to have had no sense of boredom; the same thing is repeated for thousands of years, the same rigid, forward-facing, stiff-armed statues; one is labelled: "It is remarkable for the fact that the right foot is advanced instead of the left"; some Picasso of the Twelfth Dynasty (but his daring was exhausted in putting the wrong foot forward). . . . The animals are often more human than the people. That seated black dog with long pointed ears standing up and long club of a tail hanging down. Or the cats—yet, since ritual and not art was always the artists' aim, they ruin some of the best by awkwardly placing a sun-symbol between the ears. . . . Most of this art combines the defects of the religious and the materialistic approach; it is religious in its ritual abstraction (the art is subordinated to communication; most of these statues are really useful objects rather than works of art) but it is materialistic in its emphasis on gigantism and on rich materials (so much of it is really quite *vulgar*). . . . Some of the Tutankhamun treasures are beautiful, but most would be commonplace were they not executed in solid gold. And isn't there something a little repulsive in the insane profusion of pins, brooches, bracelets, necklaces, amulets, breastplates, etc., etc., possessed by Tutankhamun and his wife? One gets the feeling they had them not for use and not even because they were greedy collectors but simply because their status, their royal duty required them to have all this stuff, for ceremonial not human reasons. There is something of this in any society, of course, but, like most things, it was overdone in Egypt. One feels sorry for the Pharaoh, the poor little rich boy, as for everyone in this death-obsessed society, where everything means something else, something abstract and not connected with human needs and pleasures, and where nothing, not even art, exists for its own sake. (I could never see why "art for art's sake" is sneered at as frivolous. For what other sake, then?) This, I think, is why Egyptian art is so alien to us. It's not a matter of historical discontinuity, since Egypt was part of the Græco-Roman world, China was not, and yet Chinese art seems familiar, while Egyptian doesn't. There is something unbalanced about this art, repeating its ritual obsessions for thousands of years unaffected by life—or art—like a neurotic so absorbed in his private magic (don't step on the pavement-lines) that he never looks up.

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Men and Ideas (XII)

Anthony West: H. G. WELLS

I FIND it difficult to write dispassionately of H. G. Wells. One of my earliest memories of him, too early for me to date, is of the occasion on which I first discovered the physical aspect of death. It was at a time when I had a treasure box, a small cigarette tin I believe, with a hinged lid. In it I kept some of the old-fashioned glass marbles, a button with a coat-of-arms upon it, and a few things of that kind which had taken my fancy. To these I one day added a few heads of snapdragon. I hoped that I would find them there in their bright prettiness whenever I wanted to look at them. But when I opened the box again after several days had gone by it held corruption and green moulds, and I screamed with dismay. I do not remember all the details of what followed, but I remember taking refuge from H. G.'s incomprehension under a gate-legged table, and I remember his lifting the edge of the table-cloth to peer in at me where I crouched, still screaming in grief and fear, and muttering "I just don't understand you."

It was a phrase he repeated, and with the same bewilderment, to me during his last illness. He was sitting with a light rug over his knees on a chair which had been placed where he could catch the sun on the glassed-in balcony at the back of his house in Hanover Terrace. We were sharing silences rather than talking. He was already extremely weak, and he husbanded his energies through long drowsy periods in which he seemed almost comatose, surfacing, so to speak, only occasionally when he wished to give his full attention to something or somebody. I would go to see him, in the hope of catching his interest and drawing him up to the surface. I wanted to drive out of his mind an impression—I do not care, even now, to think how he had been given it—that I had been "got hold of" by a pro-Nazi conspiracy somehow entrenched in the British Broadcasting Corporation which was then employing me in its News division. These conspirators were, he had been told, blackmailing me in some way and forcing me into some mysteriously discreditable line of conduct for an arcane ulterior purpose, the nature of which I have never been able to discover. This nightmare cobweb of misunderstanding had fallen between myself and my father in the first stages of the V-1 attack on London; it remained upon our faces through all the time the attack lasted, through the stranger time of V-2, until the war receded into the Pacific and left London in shocked and stunned silence. At first my father seemed too ill to be bothered with the necessary explanations. Then he made a partial recovery and I was able to hope. I sat with him often, when I was not on duty in the newsroom at the BBC, longing for the moment when he would open his mind to me. But the occasion never came, and at last I became aware that it never would. Sitting beside him one day, at once in the closest proximity to him and utterly remote from him, and, thinking him asleep, I fell into a passion of misery and buried my face in my hands. How long this spasm of pain lasted I don't know, but when its intensity slackened I suddenly became conscious that I was being watched. I looked up to find his eyes fixed upon me with all the clarity of his fully-conscious mind behind them. We stared at each other for an instant before he said, once again, "I just don't understand you." Then the light left his face. He had, as it were, turned himself off, and had relapsed into his dozing state on the frontier between sleep and death. The last chance of communication had gone, and there was never to be another. Rather more than a year later I chartered a boat named the Deirdre owned by a Captain Miller of Poole in Dorset, my half-brother came down from London bringing with him H. G.'s ashes, and we went out to scatter them on the sea at a point on a line between Alum Bay on the Isle of Wight and St. Alban's Head on the mainland. As we

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returned I found myself surprised at the extent of my bitterness. That I should have preferred my father to realise that I had been going through a sufficiently banal marital crisis, rather than to believe that I was falling into the hands of blackmailers who had been using me as a tool for treasonable purposes, was easy enough to understand. But that I should feel so violently about the matter when he was no longer in a position to believe anything at all shocked me, as it still does.

It will be realised why in those circumstances a self-protective device told me that Wells's mind was clouded by illness at a much earlier stage than it probably was to any significant extent. For some years after his death I reacted angrily to the criticisms of the quality of his thought which made so much of the extreme pessimism of his last writings and utterances. These were, and still are, being represented as an abandonment of a superficial optimism in the face of those realities of which his coming death was a part. The suggestion is made that they were some kind of final admission that he had been wrong about the nature of things for the greater part of his life. I felt at one time that this was a wilful exploitation of the auto-intoxication of a very sick man who no longer enjoyed full command of himself. But since sifting my recollections of his talk, and doing a great deal of preparatory work on his biography, I incline to another view. I cannot now agree that his final phase of scolding and complaining at human folly represented any essential change in his views at all. What happened as his powers declined from 1940 onwards was that he reverted to his original profoundly-felt beliefs about the realities of the human situation. He was by nature a pessimist, and he was doing violence to his intuitions and his rational perceptions alike when he asserted in his middle period that mankind could make a better world for itself by an effort of will.

THIS contention may seem grotesque to those who have a picture of him firmly entrenched in their minds as a kindly, avuncular figure promising men a birthday with lavish presents every week if the scientists were only given control of society. Last year Dr. Bronowski took time off from his duties as Director of the Coal Research Establishment to tell Section L of the British Association: "H. G. Wells used to write stories in which tall, elegant engineers administered with perfect justice a society in which other people had nothing to do but be happy: the Houyhnhnms administering the Yahoos. Wells used to think this a very fine world; but it was only 1984...." This represents the received view. Mr. St. John Ervine in his life of Shaw asserts that Wells believed that infinite social progress was inevitable unless there were some global catastrophe; and George Orwell attributed his final despair to a belated realisation that science was just as effective on the side of evil as on the side of good. And only the other day Mr. Geoffrey Barraclough, Professor Arnold Toynbee's successor in the Stevenson Research Chair of International History in London, was telling us that the evolutionary conception of society found its supreme expression in Wells' *Outline of History*. According to him this postulates that "the development of intelligence is the work of 'natural selection,' and that inexorable laws of natural selection will result in the replacement of the present imperfect society by one in which a finer humanity will inhabit a more perfect world."

The diffuseness and looseness of much of Wells' writing, and the tone of a great deal of his occasional journalism, lends itself to this distortion of his basic ideas. But the fact remains that the body of work which bears his name contradicts these assumptions about his views, and the reader who undertakes to examine all of his writing scrupulously is in for a number of surprises. Wells received a scientific education and he never fell into the fallacy of confusing the Darwinian conception of evolution with the idea of progress. The idea of progress depends fundamentally on a picture of the universe in which mind is increasingly valuable, and which is also increasingly orderly. Wells' first serious piece of writing was a paper called "The Rediscovery of the Unique" of which he remained proud throughout his career. Though it does not reach a standard which would be acceptable to professional philosophers and logicians, it restates with clarity and force the idea which Hobbes put forward in *Leviathan* (I, iv) when he says that there is "nothing in the World Universal but Names, for the things named are every one of them Individual and Singular." This is the foundation stone of the mechanistic view according to which the whole world is "nothing but a mere heap of dust, fortuitously agitated" and the universe a similar aggregation. It is impossible to believe in progress if you believe in a universe in which mind figures as a local accident, and which by its nature cannot support any permanent moral order or indeed any permanent thing.

That Wells was deeply committed to this view is evident from his first novel, *The Time Machine*, which has its climactic scene at a point some thirty million years in the future. The planet has ceased to revolve. It no longer supports human life, and it is evident that the time is rapidly approaching when it will no longer support life at all. A cosmic catastrophe

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is impending which will finally obliterate the material context in which such concepts as mind, consciousness, and value can possess any meaning. The possibility of such a situation is irreconcilable with the idea of progress, and Wells states his disbelief in it in this book without ambiguity. The questions which the Time Traveller asks himself on the first phase of his journey into the future are interesting, and revealing:

"*What might not have happened to men? What if cruelty had grown to be a common passion? What if in this interval the race had lost its manliness, and had developed into something inhuman, unsympathetic, and overwhelmingly powerful? I might seem some old-world savage animal, only the more dreadful and disgusting for our common likeness—a foul creature to be incontinently slain.*"

What is implicit in these questions is the idea that an evolutionary trend that would make man a more intellectual animal might also make him a much less humane one. This not only questions the idea of progress, but also suggests that virtue is not innate in the intellect as Victorian moralists were inclined to believe. I stress this point because it seems to me to be an important one if one wants to understand Wells' thinking. The conventional picture then was, and still to a considerable extent is, of a conflict between mind and man's animal nature, with the virtues seated in the intellect and the defects in the instincts and the animal behaviour patterns. Wells suggests that morals and ethics have their basis in man's behaviour as a social animal. That is to say that disinterested behaviour develops from a hunting animal's practice of bringing food back to its lair for its mate and its young; and that humanitarianism, and the sympathies that make life endurable, develop from the animal habit of snuggling in a huggermugger, as puppies or kittens do, for warmth. The intellect on the other hand is amoral and ultimately recognises the single value of efficiency, so that a continuation of the line of development that had made man a reasoning animal might ultimately make him more callous, indifferent, and cruel, and not more moral. This nagging fear of the liberated intellect as something inhumane was to play an important part in Wells' later work, but he raised it in *The Time Machine* only to drop it in favour of an explicit statement about natural selection. The premise is that the 19th century layered class society constituted an artificial environment to which man was adapting himself. The donnée for the purpose of *The Time Machine* was that it was going to endure; so the Time Traveller finds, in the year A.D. 802,701 that adaptation has divided the human race into two distinct subspecies. The descendants of the old ruling and propertied classes live above ground and fear the dark, those of the workers and managers subterraneously in fear of the light. Both are hopelessly degenerate, and neither considers the Time Traveller to be an old-world savage, because neither group is capable of sufficient sustained thought to frame so elaborate a concept. It is with something of a shock that one finds that what has brought about their debasement is precisely the complete success of mankind in establishing a technological society and world order of the kind to which Wells is supposed to have given his unqualified endorsement. At some point during the eight hundred thousand year interval men completely mastered their environment and solved all the social problems. When they were comfortable they stopped thinking, and then degenerated along the lines of their own inherent weaknesses.

ONE OF the difficulties of writing about Wells is that his mind was undisciplined, and that on any given point he can be found either to contradict himself, or to appear to do so. *The Time Machine* was immediately followed by *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, which Wells discussed much later, in the twenties, as if he had accepted a dualistic picture of human nature while he was writing it: "Humanity is but animal rough-hewn to a reasonable shape and in perpetual internal conflict between instinct and injunction." This would give innate virtue a refuge in the intellect, and would allow for optimism as a possibility. But what happens in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is a disaster, the liberated intellect in the person of a Darwinian humanitarian arrives on the island and disintegrates its theocratic moral order by making an appeal to reason which assumes that Dr. Moreau's victims are moral creatures with better natures. When they are set free from the Hobbesian régime of terror under which they have been living it is revealed that they are, beneath Dr. Moreau's scar tissue, brutes interested only in the satisfaction of their appetites. So far as a conflict between instinct and injunction goes, it is no contest; order and law are imposed on the brutish inhabitants of the island by an exterior force, and as soon as that is removed the system collapses. What the book in fact expresses is a profound mistrust of human nature, and a doubt about the intellect's ability to contain it. There is even a doubt about the intellect as a possible containing force, since its rôle in the story is a purely destructive one.

The Island of Dr. Moreau relates closely to two other stories, a short novel and a short

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story, which deals with the same theme of the liberated intellect as a destructive element. *The Invisible Man* is a parable about the amoral aspects of the scientific outlook, and invisibility figures in it as a symbol of intellectual isolation. *The Country of the Blind* is a much more mature version of the same parable, in which the symbolic situation of the sighted man in the community of the blind is even more harrowing. In both stories men are cut off from normal human feeling and corrupted by the sense that their special knowledge gives them a right to power over the unenlightened. They both end by running amok in the same lonely terror which overtakes the visitor to Dr. Moreau's Island. The theme is carried further in *The War of the Worlds* and in *The First Men in the Moon*. The Martians, like the ruling class on the moon, are brain cases with the merest of vestigial bodies, symbols of the intellect triumphant over the animal. The point that technological mastery has given the Martians a sense that they are free from moral responsibility is obscured by the surface action in *The War of the Worlds*. Most readers do not see beyond the fact that the Martians arrive, and treat Europeans as Europeans had been treating native populations and animals in the hey-day of colonialism, to the deeper argument. But there is no possibility of misunderstanding the description of lunar society which appears towards the end of *The First Men in the Moon*. The unfettered intellect rules, and respect for efficiency stands in the place of morality. What has come into being is the worst kind of slave state. It has reduced most of its members to simple automata. Many of them are actually deformed physically to fit them more precisely for specific social functions. When the labourers of various types are not required they are laid aside in induced coma until they are needed. Wells' scientist, Cavor, reports on this society with naïve approval, so that there can be no doubt about what he is getting at. The clear implication is that a further extension of human intellectual powers in the post-renaissance direction of abstract rational thinking will lead to the growth of cruel and inhuman planned societies which will be utterly indifferent to human values and individual happiness. Human sympathies will be stifled, and endless cruelties perpetrated in the name of an abstract common good, because logical analysis finds that human sympathies have no basis in the sort of reality that it can recognise. The scientific apparatus for examining reality is hostile to values in so far as it shows that any system of values is purely arbitrary. In the end, what Wells is saying in *The First Men in the Moon*, is that the basis of operations which Huxley recommended in his famous Romanes lecture, and which he had himself adopted and stated in the concluding paragraphs of *The Time Machine*, is not viable. Because if a mechanistic view of the universe is constructed by the right hand the left will inevitably loose its grip on any ethical system it may have decided to grasp.

IT MAY seem that this is reading something into *The First Men in the Moon* which is not there, but Wells went out of his way to state it in a mundane context in *When the Sleeper Wakes*. Many people recall this novel of 1899 as a description of the triumph of gadgetry with its descriptions of flying machines, television, public address systems, and air-conditioned roofed-in cities. It stands as the optimistic and naïvely uncritical forerunner of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and Orwell's *1984*. In fact Wells' society of 3002 includes many of the worst features of both these later constructions. It "features" a deliberately debased and systematically misinformed proletariat, constant surveillance and thought control, and an amoral brutality; and these things are described as evils. The difference between Wells' horrors and those described by Huxley and Orwell reside mainly in points of detail. Wells was writing before the two great wars and the dictatorships had made the state as dangerous an engine as it now seems. For Wells the enemy was monopoly capitalism as it presented itself in the form of the great corporations. But his business state is just as monstrous as the police state of Orwell's imagination, and is perhaps worse in that it does not bother to persecute individuals as individuals, but simply treats people in terms of social categories and utility. Wells' equivalent of Big Brother, Ostrog, the head of the super-corporation's governing body says: "*I can imagine how this great world of ours seems to a Victorian Englishman. You regret all the old forms of representative government... the voting councils and parliaments and all that eighteenth-century tomfoolery. You feel moved against our pleasure cities. I might have thought of that—had I not been busy. But you will learn better... the pleasure cities are the excretory organs of the State, attractive places that year after year draw together all that is weak and vicious, all that is lascivious and lazy, all the easy roguery of the world, to a graceful destruction. They go there, they have their time, they die childless, and mankind is the better.... And you would emancipate the silly brainless workers that we have enslaved, and try to make their lives easy and pleasant again. Just as they have sunk to what they are fit for... I know these ideas; in my boyhood I read your Shelley and dreamt of*

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liberty. There is no liberty save wisdom and self-control. Liberty is within, not without... suppose that these swarming yelping fools in blue (the proles wear blue uniforms) got the upper hand of us, what then? They will only fall to other masters. So long as there are sheep Nature will insist on beasts of prey. It would mean but a few hundred years' delay. The coming of the aristocrat is fatal and assured. The end will be the Overman—for all the mad protests of humanity. Let them revolt, let them win and kill me and my like. Others will arise—other masters. The end will be the same."

From his viewpoint in 1899 Wells was able to see that the growth of a technological society would throw up régimes much worse than those of such simple-minded tyrants as Napoleon III. Ostrog is more like Hitler than anything which had then been seen, he was probably conceived as a criticism of Carlyle's hero worship, while the society he presides over is a criticism of the structural aspects of Plato's Republic.

I HAVE dwelt on these early books of Wells' because they seem to me to show how foreign to his thought the ideas that either evolution or technical development would inevitably produce a moral order, or even a better order, were. I think, too, that the view of human nature taken in these early books accounts for the flaw in the later ones which now makes them seem ill-considered and confused. These are forced in so far as they say things which Wells wishes to believe, and in which he, ultimately, does not believe. What he ultimately does not believe in is the ability of the human animal to live up to its ideals. *The Time Machine*, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, and *When the Sleeper Wakes*, all state this idea quite bluntly. In mid-career Wells stopped saying this and adopted the progressive line, stating a body of ideas which can be called Wellsian.

These can be summarised roughly as follows. Education and the liberal tradition have produced a disinterested group of men of good will capable of taking hold of the drift of modern life and of giving it coherent direction. Cheap paper and mechanised printing together with the prosperity and leisure produced by industrialisation have made universal education a practical possibility. An educated community (as distinct from a merely literate one) would be able to establish rational relationships with other communities. Improved communications would bring these educated communities into increasingly close contact with each other and a world community would develop. A sense of kinship would grow up among all men, and instead of squandering their creative potential in pointless and destructive wars they would learn to settle their differences by negotiation and agreement. A world order would take shape in which racial, regional, and national frictions would have no place. Men would work happily together to bring each other a fair share of the world's abundant wealth. There are no logical objections to this as a plausible future course of development for human society if the romantic view of human nature is once accepted, and man is taken to be a creature of infinite possibility. If man is such a creature, it is then just a matter of adopting this rational aim and making a great collective effort to secure it. Wells wished to proceed, and to persuade other people to proceed, on this basis. But he knew that in the long run all human effort was futile and that man was base. The world was Dr. Moreau's Island and the men of goodwill were building on sand with obdurate material which by its essence excluded any possibility of success. Wells' "progressive" writing represents an attempt to straddle irreconciliable positions, and it involved a perpetual conflict of a wasteful character. In all too much of his work he is engaged in shouting down his own better judgment.

The change of front from an explicit pessimism to an apparent optimism dates roughly from 1901 and the publication of *Anticipations*. It coincides with Wells' entry into the sphere of influence of the Fabian society in political matters and of that of William James in philosophy. James' name shows up in a list of men recognised as great by the business state described in *When the Sleeper Wakes*. This may suggest that Wells may have had some doubts about his ideas at first but the reference is misleading. Wells admired James greatly and gave Pragmatism his very emphatically expressed approval. It is easy enough to see why, since James' main positions are designed to plug the holes in Huxley's Romanes lecture. Huxley's straddle involved mental compartmentation. One part of the mind accepted the mechanistic view of the universe and one kind of truth, the other accepted the idea of a moral order and another kind of truth to which the first was hostile and destructive. James invented the idea of operative truth which is supposed to cover the difficulty:

"*...ideas (which themselves are but parts of our experience) become true just in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relations with other parts of our experience.*"

"*True ideas are those we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify. False ideas are those we cannot.*"

"*The true, to put it very briefly, is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as 'the right' is only the expedient in the way of our behaving.*"

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The two first of these propositions dispose of the mechanistic view of the universe much as a lazy housemaid disposes of dust by sweeping it under the rug. The truth about the universe which it states neither helps us to get into satisfactory relations with other parts of our experience nor is subject to verification. (It is possible to postulate conditions in which mind, consciousness, and experience would have no meaning, but not to verify or experience them.) The basis for pessimism therefore loses its status as truth. The last proposition deals with any realistic appreciation of human nature: it is inexpedient to consider man base, at any rate when one is trying to construct a better world, so that the idea may be dismissed as untrue.

HOWEVER much these propositions may have appealed to Wells' humanitarian feelings, they grated on his æsthetic sense and his intelligence fought with them, so that it became an increasing effort to pretend that they "worked." The doubts emerge as early as 1904, in *The Food of The Gods*. This is a progressive parable about the way in which human undertakings have outgrown petty national states and their parochial administrative units. It had its genesis in a talk on Areas of Administration given at the Students' Union in the Grosvenor Road in March 1903—with Beatrice Webb in the chair. It is rounded out with a pep-talk for the new order. But, and the but is a large one, the scientists who produce the food of the Gods have no idea of what they have done. The Skinners, who put it into use in the world, are monstrous parodies of the average man, and the food produces super-rats as well as super-men and super-chickens as a result of their sloppiness and carelessness. The book is very convincing as long as it is describing how things go wrong and hardly convincing at all when it attempts to say how they will go right. What it effectively describes is the frustration and destruction of a great possibility by inferior human material. The optimism of the conclusion rests on a trick. The food of the Gods has produced a new, larger, nobler breed of human being adequate to the technological possibilities open to it, and the future rests with them. The device is transparent, and it is hard not to feel that the evasion of the real problem, of what can be done with human nature as it is, is not a conscious one. It is the first of a series of such calculated evasions. They are less apparent in the books about people than elsewhere, but they emerge from these too: *Kipps*, *Tono-Bungay*, *Ann Veronica*, *The History of Mr. Polly*, *The New Machiavelli*, *Marriage*, *The Passionate Friends*, and *The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman*, all superficially suggest that Wells is asking the question "what shall we do with our lives" as if the answer could be "whatever we wish." But the line of development followed in the books shows an underlying doubt about this answer. They show a steadily diminishing confidence in the possibility of individual solutions. What emerges at the end of the chain is the idea of the Mind of the Race, a group intellect which will be freed from individual weaknesses, and which will save humanity from its instincts. This group intellect is to be served by semi-religious orders of devotees, the Samurai, who are to surrender their lives to it. But at the back of this conception is an awareness that it is not consistent with human nature that such a surrender should in fact take place. This recognition led to Wells writing a series of catastrophe books, stories in which he imagines that human nature undergoes some fundamental change that will permit the construction of a Utopian society. The ideas of Hobbes play a large part in these fantasies. Fear, generated by a cosmic disaster as *In the Days of the Comet*, or by atomic war in *The World Set Free* (1914), leads men to submit to some kind of central world government modelled on the Common Power described in *Leviathan*. But the idea of a change in human nature itself is the *sine qua non* of his utopias, and in the end Wells conceded that such a change was not within the realm of possibility. His much-parodied *Men Like Gods* is the point of concession, and it is odd that those who have criticised the book as representing the unpracticality and unreality of his idealism in its extreme form have not noticed the fact. The ideal beings which inhabit its Utopia exist in a free zone which is not within the realm of human reality. They are special creations like the giant children in *The Food of The Gods* and like them they are designed to evade the truth about human nature. They live in another universe outside the earth's spatial scheme altogether, which is part of a very elaborate construction indeed:

"Wonder took possession of Mr. Barnstaple's mind. That dear world of honesty and health was beyond the utmost boundaries of our space, utterly inaccessible to him now for evermore; and yet, as he had been told, it was but one of countless universes that move together in time, that lie against one another, endlessly like the leaves of a book. And all of them are as nothing in the endless multitudes of systems and dimensions that surround them. 'Could I but rotate my arm out of the limits set to it,' one of the Utopians had said to him. 'I could thrust it into a thousand universes.'"

This is optimism at the last ditch, an allowance of the cold comfort of an eternal moral

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order somewhere in a system of plural universes wholly inaccessible to human experience. And beyond that, the construction has the effect of making the book not a debate between man-as-he-might-be and man-as-he-is, but an essentially sterile clash between reality and an unattainable ideal. At best it is a cry of distress, a plea for things to be other than they are. *Men Like Gods* is in reality an altogether pessimistic book. Read in conjunction with *The Undying Fire*, which prepared the way for it, and which is a violently expressed hymn of loathing of things as they are, it leaves no doubt that in his last writings Wells was only giving a new form to beliefs which he had held all along. *The Undying Fire* is particularly moving, to those who have any sympathy with Wells at all. It shows the pendulum of his mind swinging away from its natural despairing bent over to the side of determination to construct something better out of human opportunities and back, again and again. Men are good enough to do something better than this, he says, gesticulating at the mess of the horrible world of 1919; and something better would be worth building however briefly it were to endure—and then he swings back: "*I talk . . . I talk . . . and then a desolating sense of reality blows like a destroying gust through my mind, and my little lamp of hope blows out. . . .*" These words were written when he was fifty-one, and they cannot be attributed to the loss of powers which are held to account for the tone of his writing from 1942 onwards. The difference between the two phases is that in 1919 his physical buoyancy and vitality supported his will to reject what he knew in his bones. In 1919, in *The Undying Fire*, he wrote:

"I can see nothing to redeem the waste and destruction of the last four years and the still greater waste and spiritless disorder and poverty and disease ahead of us. You will tell me that the world has learnt a lesson it could learn no other way, that we shall set up a League of Nations now and put an end to war. But on what will you set up your world League of Nations? What common foundations have you made in the last four years but ruins? Is there any common idea, any common understanding yet in the minds of men?"

The utterance is a despairing one. But Wells reacted to it by setting himself the task of attempting to fabricate the necessary common idea. *The Outline of History* was designed to provide a universal history which would serve as the basis for a patriotism of humanity, as national histories serve as a basis for national patriotism. What the book states is, not that progress is inevitable, but that mankind has a common historical background, not a racial or a regional one. It goes on to say that given the will mankind might, by a tremendous concerted effort, establish a world order in which all its energy could be consumed in constructive and creative enterprises, physical, æsthetic, and intellectual. The pendulum swung from one extreme to the other between 1919 and 1920; with the publication of *Men Like Gods* in 1923 it had swung right back.

IF I APPEAR to be saying that Wells was inconsistent, it cannot be helped, inconsistency is the natural consequence of an unresolved conflict in a writer's work or thought. Wells' inconsistencies could be quite dazzling at times. I remember receiving a kind of marriage sermon from him when I was first married in which he made a great point of monogamy and fidelity as being an essential to true happiness. Later on I received a number of tongue-lashings on the subject of divorce: when I told him that I had always thought of him as a man who had saved himself much unhappiness by divorce, he objected that this had no bearing on the fundamental principle. Later on we had some violent arguments on the question of pacifism. I had read a substantial part of *The Autocracy of Mr. Parham* in the light of a case for pacifism, and I still find it very hard not to do so. But in 1939 I was surprised to find that Wells took the line that once the country was at war it was the citizen's job to do what he was told to do without argument. We had many heated discussions about this which generally became a great deal more heated whenever I began to defend myself with the phrase "but you said, in Mr. Parham, that. . . ." "*That* has nothing to do with it, nothing at all. . . ." During the extremely bitter internal dispute among the Fabians in the early nineteen-hundreds Shaw attacked Wells on these grounds, attributing his lack of intellectual discipline to the fact that he had such tremendous facility and rapidity of mind that he had never had really to face any practical or intellectual difficulty, he had always been able to dodge. This may be so. But I am inclined to trace the trouble to the central dilemma, and to think that inconsistency and evasion became a habit of mind because he could never bring himself to deal with it. He comes out with it in *Boon*:

"'And that is where I want to take you up,' said Wilkins. 'I want to suggest that the mind of the race may be just a gleam of conscious realisation that passes from darkness to darkness. . . .'

'No,' said Boon.

'Why not?'

'Because I will not have it so,' said Boon."

Wells was Wilkins and Boon at once, and also

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Hallery, the intensely serious exponent of moral values who introduces an almost Calvinist note into the book. It was, of course, *Boon* with its parody of Henry James, and its harsh criticism of æsthetic values, which finally established his reputation as a Philistine. From *Boon* onwards he made increasingly strident attacks on literary values which are, in my view, only partially explicable by his sense that in the state in which the world found itself æsthetics were a luxury for which there was not enough time. It is my view that these attacks, which went along with his reiterated statements that his own work had no literary value, that it was merely journalism, attached to contemporary issues, which would become meaningless inside a couple of decades, reflected a troubled inner sense that there was something profoundly wrong about his own course of development. In the end I believe, on the strength of conversations which I had with him on the particular subject of what he meant by Dr. Moreau, and on some related topics, that he came to feel that a realisation of the truth of the human situation, in all its ultimate hopelessness, was much more likely to stir men to present effort to make life more tolerable than any pretence. He felt, or so I think, that he had made a mistake in not quashing *Boon*'s easy sentimentality. He knew in his bones that the æsthetes were right, and that the writer's sole duty is to state the truth which he knows. At the close of his life, from *The Croquet Player* onwards, he was trying to recapture the spirit in which he had written *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, and what haunted him, and made him exceedingly unhappy, was a tragic sense that he had returned to the real source of what could have been his strength too late.

All this is, of course, about the inward centre of his work. Few people have brought so much buoyant vitality to the business of living, or have exercised so stimulating an effect on their friends. He spread a spirit of pleasure about him, and he made every kind of mental activity seem to be the best of sport. Although he made a number of enemies through impatience and lack of tact he made many more friends whose friendship endured through episodes which would not have been forgiven in a lesser man, and who when all was said and done rejoiced in having known him. Beyond that close circle of people who knew him there was the larger army whose hearts were warmed by the abundant spirit and courage which emanate from his writing and which make it easy to miss the intensity of his internal struggle with his demon.

Landscape Painter

All his perspectives were right, he was almost sure,
The subject tasteful, colours laid on well,
The bright ones luminous, the light ones pure.
What had gone wrong he was damned if he could tell.

As was correct, he'd left in trees and sky,
Left out the peasants snoring in the mud;
Where he'd made slips he could not tell, nor why.
He felt them like transfusions, in his blood.

His picture smiled at him: he stared at it.
The style was charming and remote,
Some taste, a manner, and a little wit.

And yet he felt a tightening round the throat
As though he wore clothes that did not quite fit:
(Perhaps) a dead man's coat.

Dom Moraes

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THE BACKGROUND OF GHIKA

Thoughts on a Greek Landscape

IT IS disconcerting to confront a landscape that a famous painter has made familiar. His colours, his private patterns, and the limitations of his exclusive rectangle have become, through long acquaintance, immutable as a theological text. Anything in the original which overflows or which fails to tally suggests deviation and heterodoxy.

Three of these encounters have come my way recently. In the first of them, the nearby traffic into Vernon and the small-gauge railway rusting a few yards from the curved bridge of *Les Nymphéas*, seemed, by virtue of their exclusion by Monet, not only irrelevant but shocking. Even when the elevation and traverse of vision were narrowed to the frontiers of the picture, the bridge, the weeping willows and the water-lilies looked schismatic. It may not have mattered that a few decades of rot have altered the bridge itself or that the trees have changed shape; even that the Norman weather was different. It was the withdrawal of the painter's mood the day he set up his easel there which had distorted the water, the floating flowers, and their dubious, multicoloured and (to me), disagreeable penumbra and plunged the scene into heresy. The whole thing had turned into a fading, impious gloss in the margin of established orthodoxy. The bridge will fall in time, the flowers and trees will die, and only Monet's picture, canonical and unquestionable on the walls of the Orangerie, will remain.

The second case was further south. Halting on a hillside near Settignano, my white-bearded and omniscient companion waved his stick across the valley towards the landscape in which Benozzo Gozzoli painted the Journey of the Magi. The shock was different here. It was the very identity of the picture with its original which astonished and nonplussed. Erosion must have modified the contours of the mountain in the intervening five centuries, rainfall deepened the water-courses and altered the stream-bed, and generations of cypresses replaced each other; but the similarity was undeviating, it was almost photographic. Flowing away beyond the imaginary frame, it was indisputably, obsessively, this particular bit of Gozzoli's Tuscany. The brocaded kings, the caparisoned horses, the birds and the hounds might have been awaiting their cue for entrance in a hidden lane.

The third of these confrontations (a much more prolonged one which is still in progress) is implied with accuracy in the title of this essay: for the last year I have not only been living in the Greek island of Hydra, where Nico Ghika has painted some of his best known and most characteristic work, but in his house. He is an Hydriot, and the terrace on which these pages are being written is a spring-board lifted over the roofs and the rocks of his chief artistic habitat. I live, in fact, in a colossal three-dimensional Ghika, and it is as a temporary denizen of this world, with no pretensions to fitness for art criticism, that I shall try to examine the relationship of his picture with these surroundings.

A STRANGE academic misconception of the Greek landscape dwells in the Western European mind. In an Augustan deer-park among gigantic oaks, draped muses lead garlanded heifers towards a group of columns and offer crowns of laurel to greaved heroes in firemen's helmets; it is partly the wonderful dream scenery of Poussin and Claude, partly the leaf-fringed legend that haunts the Grecian Urn: a land of pan-pipes in a mild undulation of hills. It is also a languid Lethean fantasy which Böcklin and Puvis de Chavannes have filled with crepuscular processions of cypresses and the meandering of still, bullrush-planted streams. An Aeolian suavity pervades this visionary Arcadia, and a sparse population of Olympians and heroes and nymphs live here. All trace of Doric hardness has been smoothed away. There is no place for the Panic terror of noon, and the chthonian demons have been chased away. The Minoans and the Mycenæns might never have existed, the Byzantines and the Turkish occupation are unheard of and no battle has been fought since Thermopylae.

All the physical constituents do, in fact, exist —in Corfu, in the vale of Tempe, on Mount

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Pelion, in Andros and Spetsai and eastern Crete, and even in bits of Arcadia itself—but Tuscany and Campania are much closer to this abstraction; it is perhaps to those beautiful and consoling regions that a romantic traveller, at a loss beneath the dazzle of real Greece, should repair. For Greece bears little relationship to this imaginary land. It is a source of confusion that the two peninsulas, so similar in geology and flora, should be so unlike. Greece is wilder and harder, less vegetated and more precipitous. Plains are more rare, towering mountain ranges soar from the sea into bare, eagle-haunted wildernesses. The dark khaki *macchia* that dulls the contours of many Italian mountains and turns them the colour of camouflaged army trucks is largely absent and the anatomy of ranges juts into the air as bare and as hard as bones. But the difference lies elsewhere.

It lies in the light. The vapours that roam the Italian air deepen the colours of the landscape, soften and liquefy the outline of things, and temper the antagonism of light and shade. This density establishes a limit to the sky and invests the country with a soft and elegiac lyricism that makes it one of the most pictorially amenable countries in the world. Under this heavier sky the cypresses fall into line, castles rise on their cones, towers ascend and machicolations spread; looping through a georgic champaign, the bridge-spanned rivers uncoil; domes rise into the umbered evening, dusk spins its cobwebs in the valleys. Inert and beautiful, the landscape has been softened up for the assault.

Greece is the opposite. Low and bright, the large sun spins in a sky of pale and unfathomable blue, drained of all but radiance. It is a sky that mounts to infinity and showers down a volley of universal and crystalline light that strips, hardens, and chisels the unblunted commotions of mineral into innumerable facets, and then, penetrating their armour, makes them transparent and, in spite of their interweaving of hard salients, as light on the water from which they spring—which, too, is splintered and immaterialised by the onslaught of the sky—as smoke. The air enclosing these mountains is alive and electrifying. A stranger feels himself surrounded with a crackling volatility which ascends to outer space. The ecstatic properties of the light, which are hard to apprehend or examine by reason, put the country beyond all danger of confusion with Tuscany, Calabria, Andalusia, or Provence, and make it, for its addicts, the most beautiful country in the world. It is also this phenomenon which rightly, after a sequence of failures, daunts a painter and makes it one of the world's most unpaintable regions.

THE typical Greek landscape, if one may take Attica to be this, looks deceptively paintable. The red earth is wavy with pale loam and bright with the green of stone pines. The slopes are serried with vines and olive trees scatter the middle distance with grey puffs of gunfire. The leaves of plane trees dapple the whitewashed villages with shadow; bare mountains hang in the background, and the sea, with its brood of islands, is seldom out of sight. This scenery overflows into the neighbouring islands of Aigina and Poros, where the slopes are gentle, the trees abundant, the houses coloured, the rooflines edged with acrotiria and with miniature colonnades, and the windows look out on a forest of masts. A joyful, almost a frivolous mood reigns over the little amphibious capitals.

These outposts of Athens shed their tangoes over the Saronic Gulf and fall astern as the ship sails southwards. It follows the shores of the Argolid, turns a cape, and the dragon-shaped rock of Hydra—naked, precipitous, and austere—looms from the sea. A first impression of inviolability, almost of truculence, is emphasised by the cannon that sprout from bastions on either side of an enclosed horseshoe of caïque-filled harbour at the base of the steep white amphitheatre of the town. The claustrophobic escalade of white houses thins out and dies among the rocks as they climb higher; the rocks continue in a turmoil to a watershed crowned with white monasteries. In the town itself, a change from the usual island architecture is signalled by the impending presence of rectangular, grey palazzi, which only the occasional delicacy of an arcaded portico relieves.

The Ghika house was built in the late 18th century by the painter's great-great-great-grandfather. It lies above and beyond the town at the end of a precipitous ascent by mule or on foot—for the island, thanks to its steepness, is as empty of wheels as pre-Columbian America. A saddle of rock to the east, covered with white houses which flow down and fill a ravine that sinks to the shore, conceals the main town. This valley divides the seaman's from the shepherd's realm, for the roughly ledged hillsides to the west, bare except for occasional almond and olive trees, are sprinkled with black goats. Beyond, in either direction, ascends a wilderness of grey and wrinkled mountains. The sea, showing through rugged hills, stretches away to the Argive coast. Islands follow each other along leagues of water that expand westwards towards the twin angular ghosts, forty miles away, of the Laconian peninsula and the inland sierras of the Peloponnese. White-walled and massive, built as a defence against the attacks of pirates, the house climbs the flank of the central watershed in four dazzling tiers. It is one of the oldest

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in the island. A tilted fortress-like wall encloses its nine strata of tree-shaded terrace. This ziggurat is honeycombed with rooms, and elaborate cedarwood ceilings enclose the larger ones like the lids of caskets.

Geological tumult and the symmetry of architecture are locked in perpetual strife. Even where the houses are thickest, insurrections of rock pierce the crust of habitations. Rock elbows its way through white quadrilaterals of wall and encroaches on the narrow lanes in outcrops that whitewash turns to banked snow. Whorls and flutings soar in organic upheavals above a discipline of roofs on which one always seems to look down: flat roofs, rimmed and revetted in the African way, or formed by the conjunction of four shallow triangles of tile. They are perched at arbitrary levels by the anarchy of the underlying rock; a despotism which lowers and hoists them and tilts the surrounding walls and twists the houses and churches out of any hope of alignment so that they strike the eye at levels and angles which defy and abolish all hint of linear perspective; sending ravines of roof subsiding seawards, piling the walls on top of one another like tiers of card-houses, aiming their planes and convexities in clusters of polygons. For the houses, as though in protest against the masterless swirl of rock, are cubic, solid, and severe. The great ones are built of regular blocks of grey stone hewn from the mountain and the dark windows are barred like those of dungeons. The others are a blinding white, and they might have been sliced and squared out of goats' cheese. The houses and the rocks alike thrust into the air an infinity of sharp and light-refracting facets.

Across this chaos of angles run flights of steps which zigzag in the manner of collapsible rulers opened at random. Terraces, tilted at strange angles to husband the rare raindrops, are backed by high, irrelevant walls buttressed like fives-courts to stem the fall of rock and the Etesian winds of midsummer. Straight as drawn tapes and swerving to avoid a precipice or a sudden anfractuosity, white stripes of wall shoot recklessly over the rocks, then trail away beyond the houses for miles, climbing the mountainside in tendrils which net the sparse fields and segregate old grazing-grounds where the mineral world, no longer bridled by architecture, runs riot. Here and there among this disorder of angles, a circular motive draws the observer's gaze: the thick masonry of a well-head that dives many fathoms into the island, the wrecked cylinder of a nuragh-like tower, the fluted globe of an amphora in a courtyard; the rainbow semicircle of a bridge across a ravine, of a culvert over a gulley, of a deep-arched doorway through an elephantine wall; the white swell of an apse, the vaulted roof of a chapel rising in an armadillo's back, a hemispherical cupola lifted on an octagonal pink drum, the spiralling steps of a lane turning with the folds of a paper fan; a circular radiation of triangular mill-sails, the shuddering hexagon, stretched on an asterisk of sticks at the end of two furlongs of string hypotenuse, of a poppy-coloured kite. Finally, the sun's blazing disc.

In this scorching light, the confusion of levels and angles and tilts adds a fourth dimension. It holds in mid-air a shower of cubes and right-angles and semicircles and spheres and polygons and polyhedra like the stage properties of a conjuror that have miraculously halted and frozen in the middle of a juggling act.

THEY ARE also the stage properties of Ghika's Hydra paintings and it is only by prolonged scrutiny of the pictures and cross-reference with the enormous Ghika I inhabit that I can marshal this magnificent disorder into a kind of coherence. Through the catalytic agency of the pictures, it is possible to break up into geometrical components the general sweep, the sinuosity of contours, the ripples of skylines, and the swerve of rockstrewn and architectural ravines; and then, with a more coherent understanding of their peculiar contribution to the total, to expand them once more to their limits. It also enables one to do the reverse, to contract and sharpen the focus on that crucial element in all Ghika's work, the shapes and consistency in the details of rock, masonry, and vegetation, their relationship to each other and their response to the light.

There are four specifically Hydriot types of building: the grey ashlars of old houses roughly levelled on their outer planes and contained by a strict network of mortar (which, expanding in fans over each barred window with their courses picked out in whitewash, resemble hoary, semicircular eyebrows); haphazard, uncemented walls built with stones of all sizes; blank house walls whose surfaces, after generations of whitewash, still show the swell and the hollows of the random stonework underneath; and pathways and courtyards flagged with irregular slabs of coarse, mauve marble so strongly outlined with broad whitewash that they resemble a giraffe's neck. Across these different textures fall the shapes of the island plants and trees. The most apparent of these are basil and marjoram and a host of herbs and, growing from jars in courtyards, the sudden sophistication of camellia and gardenia; acanthus, thistle and thorn, an occasional sunflower, the lanceolate leaves of oleander, trowel-shaped and drooping croton, long asphodel stalks, the rusty bombs of pomegranates, and the dark green explosions of the

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bitter sea-squill. (The vine, symbol of the Greek landscape elsewhere, is absent.) Occasionally a blue-black ilex appears, a carob or two, a few solitary cypresses, and still fewer pines and orange-trees. But the true foliage of Hydra is the green and the silver of olives, each shedding round its contorted trunk a brittle disc of shade; the pale green froth of almond leaves raised on sooty stems like the legs of Siamese cats; and, above all, fig-leaves showering down heavy shadows from buckled candelabra-branches of dull silver. Sporadic and independent, thriving where they can on the dry hillsides, none of them are dragooned into groves. Aloes and agaves are the only gregarious plants, with the prickly pear which gesticulates in sudden whirling spinneys of green ping-pong bats set with malformed thumbs; and those glaucous cactuses that scale canyons, swarm ruins, and spread their panoplies among shattered walls with the alien fierceness of a Saracen raid. Even at midday their huge and ghostly swords look as if they were lit by the moon.

The colour of the architecture among which all this unfolds is austere enough. It is predominantly white and grey, but a few houses are washed over with ochre or pink or Roman ox-blood. The red roof-tiles fade to biscuit, and some of the doors and shutters are painted, like the boats, ochre or pink, a faded sky-blue, a watery Nile green, or a cool grey, seldom with a primary colour. Now and then a frill of acroteria ruffles the eaves, a criss-cross of green trellis bars a courtyard with lozenges, a golden honeycomb proliferates. A few walls are topped by little balustrades, a balcony involves the eye in a swirl of iron arabesques, a bell-hamper blooms like a rose petal, and primitive tiered campanili shine with the transparency of alabaster. The rocks are grey limestone shot with patches of rust where they are chipped or where fragments have fallen away: a colour that flames bright orange at sunset as though fissures in hollow mountains let out the glare of internal fires.

The sun, as it moves through its daily arc, affects all these things as tellingly as the indications of a gnomon across a dial. The soft shadows coiling and branching in the dry torrent beds shrivel to intricate espaliers. Colours that sprang to life at dawn begin to languish as the late morning advances. In the shuddering light of noon the colours cancel themselves out and the shade dries up and vanishes like water. Everything becomes brittle and dazzling and the leaves and the flocks are gorgon-struck in a shadowless, spell-bound world in which all but the incandescence of the sea has fallen into catalepsy; a spell which the late afternoon, with the oblique slant of the sun and the reassembling of shade, releases into motion once more. Up the mountainside now stretch ravines of porphyry and verd-antique and lapis and through the bone-white walls ice-blue lights flow, and tired gold and rose and lilac. It revives all the different greens, breathing life into the colours, evoking reliefs and salients and dimensions and warrening hollows and vistas, twirling the stepped helix of each climbing lane, kindling the russet limestone caverns, re-sharpening the crystalline cutting edge of the light, re-faceting masonry and setting fire to the water—a fire that slowly dies as the sun slopes beyond a western cordillera to leave wide sea-meadows of pale and faintly ruffled silk, while the overlapping islands and faraway mountains change from their iceberg transparency into a superimposition of many photographic negatives and then into a succession of darkening blue stage-wings that only very slowly resolve themselves into a long silhouette. Just as the walls remain warm to the palm of the hand, houses and trees glow with a minor private radiance long after the sun has left them; everything is absorbent to light and colour, and stores it up; and when the moon is full its radiance is so bright that, instead of the usual universal silver, everything retains a muted and deeper version of its strong diurnal colour.

All the detail of this long exordium is observed through Ghika's spectacles. The same bright glasses have revealed three atmospheric phenomena of the Greek light. The first is a trick of the gazing retina which turns the sun at its zenith into a jet black disc enmeshed in oscillating loops of white, orange, and yellow; sometimes transforming it for a few seconds into a sable-yoked egg that petulantly fries in the sizzling empyrean, sometimes into a black-centred marguerite whose petals project in prongs which swirl with the spin of their dark and flickering heart. This tormenting scrutiny, if prolonged, fills the surrounding sky with motes and flecks like the floating chaff flung in the air by a winnower. The second phenomenon is another property of the sun: when it strikes a solid it performs three simultaneous and contradictory functions. It acts like an x-ray on things at a distance, it sharpens and accentuates those close to. But, very strangely, it also dusts and makes friable the smoothest and most vitreous of surfaces, seeming to scatter on them an invisible pollen as light as the damask on a moth's wing. The third is the hallucinating effect of shadows in the early morning and late afternoon. They become luminous shapes of phosphorescent green, indigo, and electric blue as intense, sometimes, as magnesium. The shadow of a tree over the sunset flush of a

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white wall or an interlock of masonry, the fleeting shadow across a terrace of a gull or a swallow, is so much sharper in outline and more intense in colour than the plane that records it, and than the bird and the tree themselves—these, by comparison, the light often appears to have volatilised—that it leaps out of focus, as though it had started forward in high relief or had excavated a sudden tree- or bird-shaped cavity in the stone.

We have seen that the idiosyncrasy of Greek light forbade the literal realism of Benozzo Gozzoli's beautiful painting; nor is there the shock, as there was with Monet's water-lilies, of the picture annihilating its model. By solving the hard problems of Hydra, Ghika offers a key to the door which so cruelly excludes painters from the secrets and the magic of Greece. It is an important victory. The data are formidable. The many temptations—the colours and shadows, the seductive interplay of planes, the "picturesque"—conceal an arsenal of hazards. After the conundrums of the light and the confusion of levels, angles, and dimensions, there are two great dangers: the loss of the main sweeps of a picture in the complex mass of detail and the danger of the detail drowning in a havoc of major themes. For yet another nonconformity of the light makes the detail of great importance; the clarity is so extreme that distance is abolished. The veils of imprecision that gather with the recession of most landscapes are burnt up here as though by a vast magnifying-glass which makes faraway objects that should logically dissolve into the fluidity of the whole remain stubbornly precise for great distances. Thus, the total and all its component parts coexist on equal terms. This shrinking of space can have the effect of tilting the horizontal into the perpendicular, making faraway objects seem positively to impend: an illusion that is made none the easier to paint by the consideration that it is very often mimicked by hard fact. The eccentric terrain really does tilt towns and panoramas to the angle of those Byzantine backgrounds stretching upwards in height instead of receding in depth. The vertiginous volcanic rocks in Byzantine painting (which, remembered from Crete, haunt the backgrounds of El Greco and, observed in Hydra, jut through the canvases of Ghika) are not always iconographic convention. With their superimposition of slabs and those dark cavities that might have been torn open with blunt scissors, the schematic undulations ascend in petrified waves. But the lens-like air bans their resolution into curves. All their angles and asperities remain and it is hard to tell whether they are small, nearby spurs or far-off Sinaïs. Likewise the sea, which should fade as it recedes and induce a feeling of the earth's roundness, does the reverse. Equally intense at horizon and shore, it stands bolt upright; and the sun's track on the water becomes, from a receding golden highway, a pagoda. Thanks to this deluding atmospheric freak, most unlikely things can play complementary parts in a single pattern. A faraway peninsula leans forward to compose a right angle with the side of a coffee cup on the windowsill. A thistle becomes involved in the summit of a belfry. A curve begun by a leaf is followed through by the watershed of an island ten miles off, a single, unbroken filament uniting them.

A rare and highly individual equipment of qualities, combined with a lifelong observation and knowledge of Greece and an innate Greek affinity with it—and I think it is not too far-fetched to detect, in his distrust of rhetoric, a trace of Hydriot-Albanian dourness and lack of garrulity—have enabled Ghika to outwit the hazards and launch his campaign under propitious auspices. The siege is conducted by stratagems, by penetrations in detail, by sapping and enfilading, by ambush and escalade, and secret intelligence with the beleaguered. Avoiding, as his main target, the single phenomenon of the light and concentrating on its incidental relationship with matter, he has captured it almost casually, as a by-product or corollary of his central purpose.

Two interpenetrating factors, both of them Greek, have been of moment in Ghika's achievement. The first of these is a kind of private geometry, no doubt assisted by post-cubist techniques, which has enabled him to solve the problems of multitude and disorder in much the same manner that Euclidean and Pythagorean computations and endless geometrical

1. Photograph by Joan Eyres Monsell
2. *The Tree*, 1950. (51×41 cm.)
   Collection: Eric Alport, Esq.
3. *Large Hydra Landscape*, 1938. (124×162 cm.)
   Collection: The artist
4. *The Black Sun*, 1947. (60×100 cm.)
   Collection: Lady Norton
5. *The Yellow Sun*, 1949. (60×80 cm.)
   Collection: Miss June Herman
6. Photograph by Philip Boucas

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figures helped the Greeks to unravel problems in a way which the chaos of their numerals forbade. We have seen that Hydra is a convulsion of planes, angles, circles, cylinders, polygons, and polyhedra, and the rocks a mesh of straight lines that distance does nothing, and the random vegetation little, to soften. It is Ghika's skill to extract a logic from this disorder, to find (but not to invent or impose) a balance of hills, a correspondence of planes and angles and to disinter a latent congruency. The rocks and the arbitrary elevations and twists of the houses rob the panorama of all but a single horizontal. But perpendiculars abound. The house-walls, the towers, and the scattered cypresses divide up everything, like a forest of plumb-lines, into upended oblongs and quadrilaterals of different colours and shadows. The unique horizontal—which all these lines, if they were produced, would strike at right angles—is the horizon itself. Bisecting the outer world, it runs between sky and sea in a ruler stroke and spans ravine ends with blue setsquares. Often the varying depths, the lines of wakes and the ruffling fingers of wind which touch the surface through clefts in the mountains draw diagonals across these shapes and cut them up into subdivisions of varying grains and intensities of blue. When the wind falls and the water turns into a looking-glass, islands are reflected as symmetrically as kippers with the horizon strung through their backbones. By accentuating or producing all these lines, by a skilful exaggeration of the shapes they enclose, by a stressing of shadow and light, by tilting the angle of a roof and underlining the lack of perspective, Ghika calls forth system in the architectural mob-rule and by a sober and delicate parody of its intractable waywardness, fills it with meaning. A secret punctilio dictates these gentle but complex manipulations as rigorously as the evolution of a theorem.

The other Greek contribution to his method is an element, partly studied, no doubt, and partly atavistic—for the thread in both religious and vernacular art is intact—of Byzantine iconography. Sometimes this overlaps and enhances the geometric strain—in the ease, for instance, with which the cavalier Byzantine perspective goes hand in hand with architectural severity—and in the half-angular, half-elliptical shadows of the walls and lanes. It occasionally conjures up those frescoes of Doura-Europos and Antioch on the Orontes that show labyrinthine towns which remain painlessly three-dimensional though they are reared like maps. The intricate economy of mosaics, the breaking up of planes, and sometimes an intentional rigidity, are often evident, so it is no surprise that his only picture to be reproduced in mosaic has an immediately appropriate air. And shadows are often placed, as they are in mosaics, more as accents than to ape reality. The same influence can be discerned in the effraction of Sinaïtic spikes which might be made of cohering rhomboids, and in the minuteness with which geometrical spaces are furnished with interlocking detail. Inserted like fragments of a puzzle, they might have been fitted into their slots at the end of tongs. The painter marshals them in their cartouches with the skill, but not the flatness or the stylisation, of a herald.

The atavism of Byzantium, both in manner and feeling, comes to his help in another emergency. Geological tyranny and the barren rocks forbid the assembly of trees and houses. They isolate everything. A fig-tree, a broken wall, a house clutching for foothold, a church marooned in chaos, there are lonely entities; and, as in the background of icons and frescoes, the solitude invests them with a disturbing momentousness. It is a phenomenon with which Byzantine symbolism knew how to deal. It is not the simpler symbolism contained in the fossilising iconographic rules laid down by Dionysios or Phourna, whereby a saint is identified by the length of his beard, by its fall in ringlets or waves, its smooth flow or its shagginess, its bifurcation or parting into three or four or five; nor the equation of colours with divine attributes. It is a symbolism which isolates objects and makes them seem, on fresco or mountainside, symbolic of their own essence. It spiritualises them and surrounds them with an aura of apocalypse. They become archetypes of themselves—archtrees, archleaves, archthistles, archwalls, archshrines. . . . Emblematic, unco-operative, and independent, they can be descried for miles. . . . If there is something numinous and magical about them in icons, in Ghika's pictures, pollinated by the evening light, echoed in luminous shadows, springing from a wilderness of lion-coloured stubble and purplish earth and scattered stones which the painter solemnises and equips with a haunting significance, they are doubly so.

His obsession with texture and consistency (as though, leaning forward, he runs a telescopic, Braille-reading fingertip of unlimited mileage across every surface to discover whether it is gained, scaly, friable, rugous, brittle, porous, resilient, or absorbent), though fascinating in itself, is no irrelevant foible. It is a crucial manœuvre in his plan to capture the balance between the constituent detail and the whole. A deep wisdom prompts him to resurrect and retain ancestral techniques. Greek iconography, the sciences of mosaic and fresco (like the Minoan motives which, two years ago, crept into his Cretan paintings) were not, in their own day, fortuitous. They reflected the surrounding

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atmosphere as inevitably as the pale washes and the diaphanous brush strokes of Chinese painting echo the bamboos, the mists, and the watery air that hover over the Yangtse river.

These pictures are the least headlong, the most deeply meditated of paintings. In conversation, the painter will listen in profound silence while his interlocutor frames a question. The silence prolongs itself a few seconds more, to be broken at last by an answer which is not only penetrating and complete but one which shifts the problem into a different and revealing light. His approach to the raw material of painting is the same. Searching observation and deep thought locate the logical (i.e. the geometrical) and the mystical content and the result is a transposition in which lies the essence of the scene. This meditation, linked with the application of secret geometry and the interplay of numerous isolated and mysterious entities, conveys a disturbing sense of delicately maintained equilibrium and the interplay of stresses; of momentum that only strict control prevents from breaking loose. It hints at an impetuous deadlock of mountains and architecture, the tautness of walls, the compression of stepped lanes, the thrust of stones into the air. A curved branch looks as though its curvature were held by an invisible bowstring, and the air, fitting as closely as a jelly-mould, seems to exert a dynamic pressure on the matter it encloses. Everything coheres and interacts. This atmosphere of power coerced, of vital interdependence and tension, is present in both the pictures and the prototype, and it can be so compelling that the observer might think that, could he stretch out his hand and remove an inch of horizon wedged in a ravine's end, the disintegration of the whole would be as alarming as the crash of a mechanism overturning: an immediate smoking chaos of broken planes, twisted perpendiculars and tangled verticals, spirals sprung loose, a twang of released curves, acute angles leaping ajar, cascades of shattered detail and the air in smithereens.

It would be easy, and a mistake, after all this talk of the avoidance of rhetoric, of strategy, and geometrical manipulation, to conclude that Ghika's approach to painting was entirely a pondered and deliberate one, a cerebral process which left no room for spontaneity; to assume that these canvases, in fact, were only so many victories of the intellect. Not all his work is dominated by this angular logic, though it runs through most of his Hydra paintings. Under a different stimulus, his lines flow and fade and wave and melt and the light and the shade, instead of dovetailing, interweave. Nor are all the Hydra pictures rectilinear. A sudden flow of curves and ellipses, a moonlight subsidence of dull turquoise into deep blue, of light into darker green, of rugous pink into tired gold and apricot and rust, the intricate veining of a leaf, the flowing spatulate shapes of fig-leaves, sudden reckless white clots of cloud—all these, by their rarity, unloose a strange excitement. Often the two strains are equal: the jar of angles and the appeasement of curves, to which colour and texture supply a sensuous delight.

The scenery of this island is violent and dionysiac; yet we have seen how perversely it resists a violent assault. But to the Euclidean and Byzantine siegecraft of Ghika, when leagued under a third mysterious poliorcetic force, the defences go down at last and resistance caves in. This third force is a compelling poetic sense which drives everything forward and irradiates and quickens the geometry and the iconography with an invisible, all-irradiating subterranean bloodstream, expanding the light and filling the shadows, sending up colours, in the manner of chlorophyll along a plant's veins, into everything. Here again the flight from hyperbole diverts the painter's eye from the evidently spectacular, from facile mergers of colours at their highest intensity, and aims it at more exacting tasks and subtler harmonies. Those are heroic scruples. The chromatic understatement augments the force of his themes and makes their impact (in opposition to that of orgiastic mountain upheavals, blazing seas of paint and exclamatory and cataclysmic sunsets) deep and lasting. This impelling and vivifying poetry, the impetus of a rich and prolific inspiration, sustains, balances, and directs the other forces at work. This poetic sense, it is tempting to say, is the square on the hypotenuse of a triangle formed by the horizon, architecture, and geology, which equates to the sum of the logic and the mysticism which square the other two sides. And if one is tempted to continue this dangerous game of analogies—and, describing one means of expression in the terms of another, one is not only tempted but compelled to do so; it is dangerous because the dam that divides it from nonsense is tissue-paper thin—if one were to reduce this general pervading poetical force to a specific poetry, it would be the hymnology of 6th century Byzantium, of which the best-known artificer is Romanos the Melode; not on account of religious content (this eclecticism would have to be corrected by citing a fondness for, among others, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Gerard de Nerval, Apollinaire, and Tailhade) but for the grave and beautiful symphonic metres, the alembication, the near-internal rhymes and assonances, the interplay of intricate conceits with a pure and most loving lyricism, the

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acrostics and recurring refrains, and a strange sprung rhythm unconsciously presaging Hopkins; for the ancient disciplines of Greek syntax converging with the spiritual thought of Byzantium. It is not by chance that the painter has an addiction to these poems and a connoisseurship of the neumes and quartertones of Byzantine plainsong.

THIS essay ends where it began, on a broad ledge of terrace surrounded by the corroborative detail of many Ghika pictures, and the moment—evening at the beginning of September—is propitious; it allies to a split second with one of his largest pictures and supplies a natural peroration; for, like emblems of dual sovereignty at either end of the sky, the sinking sun and the rising moon preside. An insubstantial thread of cloud, only discernible because of these two discs, crosses them both: one rimmed with red, the other with a metallic green. The cicadas have stopped, the swallows have gone. There is a faint jangle from the black goats that scatter the mountain behind like cave paintings, and from a window below, a preliminary fingering of strings. It is the hour of the bat and the little owl.

Two conflicting systems are at odds. The sunset-facing walls, pierced by the dark eyes and the occasional flare of windows and the yawn of doorways, are flushed a temperate pink striated with magnesium shadows. The eastern ones struggle between their own dying radiance—for the sun has left them—and the icy blue of the moon, while the moon's opposite-leaning shadows, faint as yet owing to the sun's rivalry, cross swords with those the sun flings. Thin as muslin, they might be snipped off with scissors and rolled up. The angles and parallelograms we know so well and the scaly roofs pile up and subside. Between faceted cones, each topped by a windmill's tubular wreck, the horizon rests in a blue lath. Distant mountains and islands, even in this fainting light, are hard and distinct as cut gems. On the solitary trees all the greens are hoisted, from the tender golden green of almonds to the aqueous olive leaves, the crowding ovals of prickly pear, the dark cypress, and the perennially moonstruck pewter of cactus. The two opposing lights underline the details of the masonry. Where the moon prevails the volume of the flagstones has fallen away and the bands that surround them hang in a thick white network. When the sun goes, the colours, clear but transmuted, will revive and float to the surface again, and the islands, silhouettes for an hour against the sunset, will re-delineate themselves as glimmering blue satellites. But where the lowering sun strikes, all is sharp and defined. The steep, blue-grey limestone, in which every cleft and wrinkle is clear, turns apricot—except where it ignites to a burning rust or faints to a thin, smoky mauve—and the hard surface has the ghost of apricot's bloom. The shallow hillsides where vegetation can find root and the valleys slung between the peaks like hammocks, have a surface of ground porphyry alternating with powdered-green serpentine marble. The lines are stretched; the lanes are taut; the angles are aimed.

Patrick Leigh Fermor

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THE UN-BELOVED COUNTRY

AMONG educated people in this country the prevailing image of South Africa is that shaped by Father Huddleston, the Rev. Michael Scott, Alan Paton (author of *Cry, the Beloved Country*), and those who—like William Plomer* —think as they do. How could it be otherwise? These are so plainly men of good will, brave, generous, and high-minded; they are imaginative, vivid, and articulate as well. Their characters command assent; their manner wins it.

And what opposes? Nothing, it seems, save a few old, rich men, the muddled heirs of Rhodes and Milner, who mumble that Huddleston makes trouble and rocks the boat; the chance visitor from South Africa, radiant with health and stupidity, who tells you that everything would be fine if it were not for a handful of agitators—meddling priests, half-baked "liberalists," or "cheeky Kaffirs"; and a group of solemn Afrikaner professors, who produce immense, unreadable, and apparently irrelevant monographs about the beauties of *apartheid*. All these people are absolutely off the English intellectual wavelength. They do not speak our language, cannot make themselves understood. The divorce between them and us is absolute.

This is a great pity. What the liberals have to tell us about South Africa is certainly true; but it is not the whole truth. I do not accuse them of wilful suppression: far from it. What they see, and what they feel, they describe honestly and accurately. But they suffer from one signal disadvantage. They are themselves *committed*. They are themselves engaged in the battle they record. This sometimes makes them less than just to the motives of those who oppose them, impatient with the doubts and hesitations of those who cannot wholeheartedly follow them. Above all, their noble zeal to see South Africa radically altered often makes them ignore the fact that what South Africa *is* must govern —to a great extent—what it will be. If, for instance, the apparatus of South African oppression of the native were by some miraculous agency swept away overnight, the fears that had constructed it and the resentments it had produced would still remain, and would powerfully influence the use made by the native of his new freedom.*

The liberal outlook in South Africa is thus incomplete in two ways: in sympathy or charity, and in what one might call conservative foresight. It thus tends to reduce to mere melodrama (hero-versus-villain, good-versus-evil) a dilemma which is in fact of Shakespearian complexity, profundity and sadness.

AMONG the delusions suggested by the liberal group is the belief that it includes all the sincere Christians and genuine idealists that South Africa has. There are, in fact, as many men of natural goodwill in South Africa as anywhere else, and many of them are in the other camp.† The *predikants* of the Dutch Reformed Church are a good example. Narrow and unrelenting they may be, uncompromisingly masculine, Old rather than New Testament Christians, with none of Father Huddleston's winning charm and gaiety: yet they are often men of outstanding intellect and probity who are idealists—and apostles of *apartheid*.

Their ideas and Father Huddleston's spring from common ground. From the bare *veld* they surveyed Johannesburg and other cities of

* "Notes from South Africa," ENCOUNTER, December 1956.

* Even the liberal groups seem to realise this fact intermittently—which may explain their frequent calls for "a change of heart" in South Africa. This, of course, is not the language of the statesman, who is compelled to do the best he can with hearts as they are, but of the idealist in despair.

† What South Africa really does lack, of course, is an intelligent, moderate "centre." The inconsistency, pusillanimity, and intellectual nullity of the United party makes a dismal impression, especially when contrasted with Nationalist vigour, alertness, and sense of purpose. This ineffectiveness is often attributed to the vacuum left by the death of Smuts, or to some other chance cause. I would not agree. It is attributable rather to the *centrifugal tendency of South African politics*, which makes moderation intellectually unsatisfying or even impossible. What I mean by "centrifugal tendency" will, I hope, be clear to the reader before the end of this article.

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Mammon; saw black and white in unregulated economic contact and noted that both sides were corrupted by it. Perhaps a rustic envy of Johannesburg's wealth lent fire to their congregations: it certainly made them more acceptable to their congregations. Their hands, like Father Huddleston's, were raised in pious horror. But there the similarity ends. They did not believe—as he does—that the conditions of contact could be altered to make it fruitful for both sides. They decided instead that it must be broken off. Black and white—they said—must be separated.

The passion with which an ideal is held must be measured by what men are prepared to sacrifice for it. The *predikants* were prepared to make large sacrifices for *apartheid*. As Father Huddleston himself points out, the Dutch Reformed Church at the Bloemfontein conference of December, 1954, declared "that industry would have to do without black labour; that whites would have to do their own housework; that there would have to be a fresh approach to the land question"—which means that the land of some white farmers would have to be transferred to black. The Dutch Reformed Church, in other words, was prepared to sacrifice to *apartheid* white South Africa's prosperity and comfort, and presumably much of its own popular support. And in their teachings and writings the professors of Stellenbosch preached an *apartheid* equally pure, austere, and self-sacrificing—and impracticable.

It was not purity, austerity, and self-sacrifice, however, which commended *apartheid* to the South African electorate (commended it, indeed, to far more South Africans than vote Nationalist). It was that they saw in *apartheid*, or in certain parts of *apartheid*, their own interests reflected. The moment the *apartheid* ideal left the study of the professor or *predikant*, it became warped by the strains and stresses of South African life.* Such parts of it as suit the white man are implemented; such as do not are not.

In particular it has been doctored to attract a new and electorally influential class—the Afrikaner poor-white of the towns. The last few decades have seen a sort of reversal of the Great Trek; the Afrikaner has drifted away from the land and the Nationalist vote no longer piles up ineffectually in rural *platteland* constituencies, but overwhelms urban ones as well. The urban Afrikaner is on the whole ignorant and ill-equipped for city life. He can only do jobs which the native, unrestricted, could do as well. He lives consequently in a perpetual state of fear which his arrogance hardly conceals. His idea of *apartheid* is a simple one: that the native should be kept down, moved on, shoved about and shown who's boss. For him the native is a threat and nothing else. Native welfare may worry professors and *predikants*; it does not worry him. And where *apartheid* works with manifest and exceptional injustice (as in the case of the destruction of Sophiatown and the mass removal of its inhabitants to another location outside Johannesburg) it is usually in deference to his wishes.

In charge of these very acts of injustice, you will often find an official in whose mind and conversation the wreckage of his idealism is still perfectly apparent: I have known several of them. He may quiet his conscience in various ways: by pointing out that Sophiatown *was* a slum (though there are twenty worse still standing); by suggesting that what appears at the moment to be injustice is only a small part of a grand plan, slowly unfolding in all its glory; or by explaining that, if he refused the job, somebody worse might accept it. He can be recognised by his manner, which is neither brutal nor stupid, but defensive, half-apologetic, over-explanatory. He will probably maintain that you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs (a dictum which might serve as any idealist's epitaph). Sometimes, even, in a burst of candour, he will confess that he is weary and disgusted by the whole business. But he is committed and he knows it.†

THOUGH this corruption of an ideal is moving and illuminating in itself, I would not have spent much time on it if it were not typical of what a country like South Africa—irrevocably split into hostile camps—does to idealists. South Africa has its own way with good intentions. It wrenches them from the hands of their originators; twists them, warps them; makes them subservient to the fears and hatred which in South Africa, in the last resort, decide everything. *Apartheid* has declined into an instrument of Afrikaner oppression. This is well understood. But South African liberals are also working with forces which they do not seem wholly to understand, which have aims in view totally different from theirs, and which would,

* The classic example is the fate of the Tomlinson Report. Professor Tomlinson (an Afrikaner despite his name) was appointed chairman of a socio-economic commission to instil some system into *apartheid*. After five years' study, he produced a massive 37-volume document, urging vast expenditure on native housing and industry and a drastic regrouping of South Africa's population. "My report," he claimed, "will stand the test of ethics." What matter? Bewildered and saddened, he sat in the public gallery of the South African lower house while his report was torn to bits by the Nationalist Government.

† Alexander Steward's book *You are Wrong, Father Huddleston* gives a fair but unintentional portrait of him.

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if they could, make South African a liberal's nightmare.

The attitude of South African liberals is based on a natural sense of shame that the black man should have been treated as he has been: so ill, with such injustice and bad faith. They regard it accordingly as their duty to see that this injustice is redressed. They are working for specific concessions, to be made by the white man after "a change of heart" brought about by fear or compassion. They do not envisage the end of white supremacy; but they believe that it should be made to work for the benefit of black as well as white. Nevertheless, two factors force the native alliance upon them—their own weakness, which makes them seek support where they can; and their belief that bridges must be flung across the widening gulf that separates black from white before it is too late. They assume—or act upon the assumption—that the native has the same objects in view as themselves. Since he marches at their side, they assume that he is going to the same place and will stop when they do. There could be no greater illusion.

The native can no longer be satisfied by concessions thrown to him by the white man. He wants not gifts, but power; he wants not specific rights, but *the power to determine his own rights*. Bitter experience has taught him that what the white man concedes the white man can also take away. Of course he would like to live where he pleases, do what job he likes, and escape from the continual humiliations of the colour bar. But above and beyond all these subordinate rights, he wants the power to make them secure: the power, indeed, if he wishes, to impose upon his white enemies all the disabilities under which he now suffers. His aim is not to make the white man see the light but—more likely—to show him the door. And how could one expect him to feel differently?

The general truth of this will be accepted by those who have watched the development of a nationalist movement in, say, India or in any British colony. The moment a subordinate objective is achieved, all interest in it is lost; agitation is switched to achieve the next; moderate leaders give place to extreme; and "permanent," "once-for-all" settlements are overturned like ninepins one after another, until, step by step, power is won. In South Africa this is no longer a matter of probabilities, intuition, or guesswork. The final objectives of African nationalism have been repeatedly stated by its leaders in the most sober terms, e.g. Chief Luthuli, President-General of the African National Congress, speaking on the B.B.C. Among his stated objectives are "the attainment of universal adult suffrage in the Union of South Africa"—a country in which black outnumbers white by thirteen to two. What Chief Luthuli wants, in other words, is a South Africa in which the white electorate is entirely swamped by the black, in which the white man's privileges, rights, property, livelihood, and even life are entirely at the black man's mercy. Chief Luthuli is regarded as a moderate man. He was speaking to an audience he does not wish to antagonise by threats or by intransigence. It is fair to assume that he expresses the African's minimum political demands. Yet, as the next speaker (a native defending *apartheid*) retorted, the white man would concede these minimum demands "only over his [the white man's] dead body."

Chief Luthuli, of course, rejects the use of violence. To say that this is the language of conscious weakness rather than of conviction is not to impugn Chief Luthuli's personal good faith. It is merely that his means are obviously inappropriate to his ends. Non-violence, passive resistance, and "the Defiance Campaign" are ideas imported from India which have all the prestige of having won independence there. But they will not succeed in South Africa. In India they were used against a handful of officials with guilty consciences, already on the defensive, half-afraid to use force, half-willing to go, and doubtful only as to the time. In South Africa they are used against an Afrikaner population (in particular against an Afrikaner police force) which is united, resolute, and violent; which is in Africa, it considers, by right and in Africa, it considers, to stay; which *must* stay in Africa because it has nowhere else to go. It cannot retire on a pension to grumble in Cheltenham or Budleigh Salterton; in Africa it lives, or dies. Against such an adversary non-violence is absolutely futile. If people like Chief Luthuli do not come to realise this, they will assuredly be supplanted by people who do.

South African liberals seem strangely blind to native ambitions and to the fact that violence must be involved in achieving them. They find it only too easy to sentimentalise over the weak and oppressed, to exaggerate their real virtues and add wishful ones to them. They claim to be the only South Africans who have any human contact whatever with the native or the slightest idea what he is thinking about. And in a sense they may be right. Between the ordinary South African and the native there yawns a rift unparalleled in any other single state: a state which was created by prejudice and indifference, and which is now widened by legislation. For many South Africans the native is merely a menace—as vague and faceless as the Yellow Peril to Kaiser Wilhelm. He is something which appears and does the work; which comes in the morning

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from heaven knows where, and goes heaven knows where when work is done. If there has ever been a Christian society with less paternal interest in its poor, I know nothing of it. In the circumstances, the native in South Africa truly shows a patience in adversity, an inexhaustible gaiety and capacity for fun which is quite astonishing and which, I am sure, too often misleads his liberal friends.

It is not merely that it is doubtful, as Mr. Sampson, the ex-editor of "Drum," implies,* whether South African liberals know any more about the native than the others do. It is that they ignore the brutal facts of a tragic situation. In every oppressed man there is a potential oppressor, in every man treated with cruelty and injustice a man possibly thirsting to repay all, with interest. Read with this insight, the most moving documents of native suffering in South Africa (though written with quite a different purpose in mind) must suggest very forcibly what the native is thinking about. Treated in the way these documents describe, the native would be more than human if his mind were not clouded by hatred, if he did not dream continually of revenge—"a Night of the Long Knives." Remember, too, what schooling in the use of political power the native has received from the Afrikaner: who dare say he has not learnt this terrible lesson?

South African liberals protect and encourage African leaders, listen to them expounding their grievances with patience and moderation and march beside them in dignified processions of protest. But do they know what thoughts lie behind the patience and the dignity? And do they suspect that for those they protect the supreme humiliation may be the necessity of expounding (with appropriate moderation) their grievances *to a white man*? And do they understand that their protégés are marching to an entirely different destination—a destination to which only violence, bloodshed, and destruction can lead them?

"I'm convinced that communism is not a serious danger in South Africa," Father Huddleston told Sampson, "otherwise I wouldn't be doing what I am . . . it'll be a terrible thing if I'm wrong." In the strict sense of the word, Father Huddleston is probably right. But "communism" does not embrace all evil; there are evil things outside it. There was a *jacquerie* before Marx, and a Terror before Lenin. "Extreme nationalism," said Chief Luthuli, "is a greater danger [in South Africa] than communism, and a more real one. . . ." If Father Huddleston were wrong about that, that too would be a terrible thing.

THE tragedy of South Africa is to be a land without unity or repose. It has no long, unfolding past, out of which the future could be peacefully evolved; nothing rocklike upon which reform can be securely based. All is agitation, with hysteria not far below the surface.† There is in South Africa no vast, steady, still centre of opinion: only centrifugal extremes, to which men are irresistibly drawn.

Fashioned for conflict, South Africa offers its choice: for black supremacy, or for white? Some —the best, maybe—reject the choice in favour of justice for both. But South Africa will not be denied. She takes those who seek justice through separation or *apartheid* and makes of them the unwitting tools of white supremacy; and she takes those who seek justice through integration or liberalism and makes of them the unwitting forerunners and agents of black supremacy. Using both impartially, she hammers the native into a revolutionary force; the one loading him with chains, the other helping him to struggle free; both fashioning him into the instrument of final, bloody, irrevocable disaster.

Colin Welch

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* "Whites are things to be used," a native journalist told him; "they can be very useful if they're handled properly. . . . You must get as much as you can out of them, obviously; and whatever you do you must avoid annoying them. . . ." "Handling whites," comments Sampson, "is an important part of an African's education; he must flatter the white man, study him, coax him, handle him with the greatest care, and at all costs avoid disfavour. . . . The mock humility of Africans towards whites is usually successful, and the whites remain largely ignorant of the deception."

† How near, the recent riots in Twist St., Johannesburg, suggest. Here was a crowd which any dozen Metropolitan policemen could (according to one observer) have handled with ease. In South Africa it provoked batons, gun-fire, and bloodshed.

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Comment

"Two Wandering Satellites"

In his excellent article on Poland and Hungary published in your January issue, Peter Wiles writes:

"In these two countries, so deeply disgraced by anti-Semitism, many Jews naturally react by being anti-Polish or anti-Hungarian as the case may be. I suggest that, in a crisis, Hungarian Jews like Gerö and Hegedüs would experience less emotional hesitation before calling in the Red Army than a pure Pole like Ochab."

As far as Mr. Wiles' general statement goes, I think one might very well argue that the emotional attachment of Polish Jews to Poland is astounding precisely because of Polish anti-Semitism. Even in the late thirties, when anti-Semitic barbarism was at its height, many Polish Jews clung to a somewhat idealistic view of a Polish liberal and universal "essence" to which they could belong. This has often been expressed by Polish writers of Jewish origin. The particularities of Polish anti-Semitism did create a certain "anti-Polish" complex, but this—strangely enough—is far more frequent among non-Polish Jews.

In the particular situation to which Mr. Wiles refers, the facts in Poland are contrary to his thesis. Gomulka's adversaries, in the Polish Politburo, who planned a "coup d'état," who had their direct contacts with Moscow, and who might have called in the Red Army if they had had the chance (they did probably call Khrushchev and the Russian generals to Warsaw) are not only "pure Poles," but rabid anti-Semites. The "Natolin group," who are the Polish Stalinists (Witaszewski, Zenon Nowak, Mazur, Klosiewicz) was acting, between the 7th and 8th Meeting of the Central Committee, according to a programme which was interpreted in the following terms by *Po Prostu*, the leading "revolutionary" weekly (October 28th, 1956):

"1.—Democratisation is equivalent to anarchy and to bourgeois liberalism. The 'intelligentsia' is the most dangerous element. It should be kept down by physical force if need be (for instance, by beating them with gas-pipes—according to the plan of General Kazimierz Witaszewski).

"2.—Another source of disorder is the press. Its big mouth should be kept shut.

"3.—The character of our relations with the U.S.S.R. must remain unchanged, and every demand of equality or of Polish sovereignty must be fought. . . .

"4.—A purge of the State and of the Party must be undertaken not according to moral or political principles, but according to racial criteria, and in particular, to purity of Aryan blood."

This programme is based on complete subservience to Russia and on anti-Semitism. In fact, anti-Semitism, while also copied from Moscow, was a very useful tool for the Natolin group in its efforts to fight against the forces which demanded more truth, independence, and democracy. Among the "dangerous" elements of the Polish "intelligentsia," Jews played an important part. Adam Wazyk, quoted by Mr. Wiles, is of Jewish origin. So are Antoni Slonimski, Pawel Hertz, Jan Kott, Artur Sandauer.

Mr. Wiles stressed the part played by Staszewski, the secretary of the Warsaw Party organisation in the decisive October days. It so happens that Staszewski's opposition to the Natolin group—and to any form of Russian interference—may have been strengthened by the fact that Polish Stalinists opposed his election to the Central Committee on account of his Jewish origin.

In pre-war days, Polish semi-fascist youth organised a famous pilgrimage to the shrine of Czestochowa, in which Catholic devotions were a curious superstructure for nationalist megalomania and anti-Semitism. A huge students' demonstration took place last November in that same Czestochowa. Some slogans carried by the students, like "Poland for Poles" were reminiscent of those of twenty years ago. But they were immediately followed by others saying: "Down with anti-Semitism." Both were directed against the Natolin group.

Mr. Peter Wiles says himself that "Moscow is extremely anti-Semitic." Poles—and Polish Jews—realise that. No efforts of Polish liberals could ever counteract the inveterate Polish anti-

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Semitism as effectively as Khrushchev's anti-Semitic utterances at the seventh meeting of the Central Committee in Warsaw, and the corresponding policy of the Natolin group.

I have limited myself to the Polish side of the picture, of which I have some knowledge. My Hungarian friends tell me that there are similarities in the position of Hungarian Jews. The conscious efforts of revolutionary leaders not only to avoid anti-Semitic incidents, but to spare the lives of some Stalinists precisely because they were Jews, in order not to confuse the issues, may probably be related to a similar evolution.

I suggest therefore that Gerö and Hegedüs had few emotional hesitations before calling in the Red Army, not because they were Jews, but because they were as good Stalinists as the "pure Poles," Nowak and Mazur, who were prevented from taking power and doing the same certainly by Ochab's attitude, but also by the spontaneous action of Poles and Jews alike, who supported Gomulka's claims for Polish independence.

K. A. Jelenski

Paris

Mr. Wiles replies to his Critics

I did not say that Mr. Milosz's doctrine of the Captive Mind "had lost its validity," as he claims in your December issue, but that it only ever had validity for a small proportion of the Polish people. This he has admitted himself, so the sole question between us is, how many? In the absence of public opinion polls we cannot say, but the question raised by Mr. Milosz's book is of vast importance, so let us address ourselves to such analysis as is possible.

The uneducated seldom have settled or systematic opinions, so they can hardly have Captive Minds in any proper sense. I suggest that peasants never have, and workers only seldom. A worker may in a superficial way believe Communist propaganda about, say, foreign capitalism, but he is most unlikely to believe his trade union is defending his interests or that he is getting richer every year (unless he is). It takes much education to overlook an obvious fact.

Mr. Milosz developed his concept in connection with fellow-travelling intellectuals. Only he omitted to stress that he meant only such as did really fellow-travel: I stand by my impression that they were never a high proportion in Poland. A far more numerous, obvious, and important case—I owe this point to conversation with Mr. Milosz himself — is Communist *apparatchiki* and administrators. These are all by definition Captive Minds (unless they are pure careerists), and their reaction to Khrushchev's secret speech was crucial for Poland's October. If Mr. Wazyk, the poet, was influential, Mr. Ochab was decisive; after all he, not Wazyk, controlled the security police. The Ochabs of all countries have written very many memoirs about their several Roads to Damascus. Everyone has his "Kronstadt," as Louis Fischer put it; we lacked only a colloquialism for the pre-"Kronstadt" phase. It would be unfortunate if Mr. Milosz's brilliant epitome of this intellectual condition came to be applied only to the Ochabs' less important and numerous literary colleagues. My own article ("In a Land of Unwashed Brains") was guilty in this respect.

Milosz suggests a third class of Captive Mind: university youth. He can never have given a tutorial at a university in a free country. *All* schoolchildren believe something or other they have been told, and unlearning it is more or less painful. It is, then, only to be expected that a high proportion of adolescent minds are captive —it is adolescents that get taught things. But there is equally nothing surprising about disillusionment among adolescents—and nothing new. If there is a journal that specialises in publishing the confessions of such people—as *Po Prostu* in Warsaw—then we get to know of it. If, as in Moscow, there is no *Po Prostu*, we don't. Adolescents have been quietly getting disillusioned with Communism in U.S.S.R. since 1917, just as previously with Orthodoxy. For that matter I occasionally meet first-year men who believe in Imperial Preference. It seems hardly fair to claim this universal phenomenon as proving a thesis about adult intellectuals under Communism. The vast majority of these, I repeat, in Poland, the overwhelming majority in Hungary, and "very many" (I shrink from greater precision) in U.S.S.R. are not Captive Minds at all but simple victims of terror.

It is true that a Pole or Hungarian looking back now will exaggerate the independence of his thinking during the Ice Age. But I don't think this is as serious as Milosz makes out. My impression in neither country was of people *groping* for new ideas, or *discovering* the falsity of Marxism. It seemed that they had always been in secure possession of their basic philosophy, and always been bored and revolted by official dogma. They lacked only detailed information and ideological refinement.

To turn to Mr. Jelenski (above), he does not disprove what I said about Gerö and Hegedüs. He only proves the Polish situation was more complicated. But indeed it was still more complicated than he says. There are, as is known, Jews who are quite unmoved by others' anti-Semitism so long as it doesn't affect themselves: e.g. Kaganovich. Hence certain Jews have figured very prominently in Stalinist govern-

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ments, despite the covert and recently overt anti-Semitism of the system. And the system itself is of course quite cynical—and sensible—enough to employ them. In Hungary there were Rakosi, Gerö, and Hegedüs; in Poland, Berman and Minc. It seems a little slippery of Mr. Jelenski not to mention once these distinguished Polish-Jewish Stalinists in so long a letter. Would not they too have called in the Red Army, had fate made them the leading Polish Stalinists? But there happened to be also pure Polish Stalinists like Witaszewski, so naturally Moscow, both for prudential and anti-Semitic reasons, relied on them. Surely then the point stands: Mr. Ochab betrayed Moscow, not least because he is not a Jew, and Gerö betrayed Budapest. Witaszewskis also exist, but it is significant that there was no Hungarian Witaszewski.

Lastly may I correct a mistake of my own? Soviet complicity with the Natolin group was far more direct than I said. The group visited Moscow this summer; it was more Soviet than Polish troops that moved on Warsaw; the Soviet leaders' interruption of the Central Committee was not merely uninvited but unannounced. The Poles first knew of their 'plane by their own radar.

P. J. D. Wiles

New College, Oxford

"Amateur Journalism"

I was a little surprised when reading the interesting and extremely well-informed article on "Amateur Journalism," which appeared in your November number, to notice that no mention was made of *Time and Tide* among the journals discussed. I should have thought that in the history of weekly journalism in this country in the last twenty years, this journal deserved a very honourable place. Its columns have given hospitality at one time or another to most of the English writers whom your readers would regard as having integrity and intellectual standing; and whether or not one agrees with its editorial comments—and I hasten to say that there are many occasions on which I find myself in acute disagreement—it must surely be admitted that in these constricted years it has done much to sustain the tradition of independent and serious criticism of policies and tendencies.

Lionel Robbins

London, W.C. 2

"The Indian Alternative"

Mr. John Strachey's "The Indian Alternative" in the October issue of Encounter can be cited as a classic example of an expert's report based on the expertise of misinformation rather than solid facts. It is regrettable that a person of Mr. Strachey's eminence should have built up the edifice of his theory on the loose sands of doctrinaire considerations rather than the solid rock of facts and figures.

Without going into the merits of his general theory, we wish to point out that he has proceeded on the wrong impression that Private Enterprise has neither the capacity nor the intention of undertaking any development in India. Getting this impression as he did from the Chief Secretary of one of the Indian Government Departments, who perhaps had his own predilection in gathering more power and patronage into his hands under the slogan of an Enlarged Public Sector, Mr. Strachey has fallen a victim to a common disease of this "State-worship" era, namely, accepting opinions expressed by some Government spokesman as the gospel of economic life.

Let Mr. Strachey have a look into the World Bank Mission's Report on India. After a careful study, the Mission reported that "the record bears out the fact that private enterprise has performed creditably during the last five years with respect to both investment and production. In the organised sector of manufacturing and mining, private business has contributed ninety per cent of the increase in net output during this period." If Mr. Strachey is reluctant to accept the conclusions of the World Bank Mission, surely he should have no objection to accepting the facts presented by the Indian Planning Commission. In its Report entitled "Programmes of Industrial Development, 1956–61," the Planning Commission pointed out that investment on new projects and expansion programmes had reached one hundred per cent of the original target of about Rs. 2,330 million, whereas the Public Sector fell short of its target of Rs. 940 million by nearly forty per cent during the first Five-Year Plan. If the starting of nearly forty new types of industry for the first time in the country is not an example of initiative by private enterprise in India, then one would like to know from Mr. Strachey the semantics of "initiative."

For the benefit of all fair-minded observers, one would like to stress that the performance of private enterprise in India has been creditable despite the severe limitations imposed on it by Government.

In view of these facts, one only hopes that experts who visit India in future will show more respect for facts rather than misinformed opinion emanating from what has been aptly described as the "Mahalanobis Zoo."

Yours, etc.,

(Prof.) C. L. Gheevala

Bombay

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"Commonwealth Poetry"

Mr. David Wright, as an ex-occupant of the sometime Empire's fringes now firmly established in the British hub has, of course, special reasons for recommending a central movement of all poets to London or Paris. In his review (December, 1956) of two recent anthologies of Commonwealth poetry he has, however, overstepped the margin of his predilection; overstepped so far, in fact, that he has plunged into a morass of snobbery one had almost thought drained dry. It seems extraordinary that at this moment, with the whole question of a *common wealth* (of culture and ideals, as well as natural product and treasure), being re-examined in the light of Britain's actions in the Middle East (actions which challenge her very domination over Canadian, Australian, and South African thought) that Mr. Wright should trot out the old fallacy about the only literary wealth being possessed by those who bear it to the shrines of Chelsea or Bloomsbury; that the best poets of the Commonwealth are those who have learned or are learning their craft from the magisterial presences who dwell amid the dry rattle of leaves in Russell Square or the susurration of gossip in Gower Street.

The supposition that no men of great intellect live in Australia (I speak for only one of the countries Mr. Wright has wronged) is not the least absurd in his review: not only does the academic life of this country tend to foster men of great detachment and independence of mind, but it has also helped to nurture during its very short history at least six poets who can be compared without a blush to any now writing in English anywhere. The fact that these poets—A. D. Hope, Kenneth Slessor, Rosemary Dobson, James McAuley, R. D. Fitzgerald, and Judith Wright—are badly represented in the latter's anthology has apparently driven her namesake to assume that nothing they write (unless it be Professor Hope's futilely masochistic anti-Australian poem "Australia") is of any value. The truth quite clearly is that he has not bothered to read the books of all six poets, books which reveal that far from being self-consciously "for" or "against" Australia, her poets are establishing a manner of writing as idiosyncratic, in its way, as American poetry was at about the same stage of development.

The fact is that Mr. Wright is out of date: it is no longer necessary, as it was when Joyce and Eliot were young men, for Americans and Irishmen, or, for that matter, Australians or Hottentots, to come to London, Paris, or Auld Reekie to be recognised. Mr. Patrick White's *The Tree of Man* has been praised in very respectable quarters as an important book; his future is assured; yet he is firmly ensconced in Australia. The contributions of Professor Fitzgerald to sinology and of Professor Mitchell to philology are not to be scorned; they were not subjected to a "central" scrutiny before proving acceptable. Mr. George Molnar's name as a cartoonist is great *because* his attitude, essentially European and sophisticated, has achieved an added detachment and freshness from the influence of the Australian scene. Australian painting is now world-famous; the works of Dobell, Namatjira, or Nolan do not merely display the richness in isolation of Australian sensibility, they have sprung from an awareness that, at home, there are splendours at once as fascinating and more strange than those overseas (does Mr. Wright think they would do any better if they were to train under the shadow of Burlington House?).

The great spaces, the clear light, the frail, ghost-like trees, the strange dawns and dusks of Australia present, indeed, an exciting challenge to the artist; it is to such far-flung that vital poetry can answer (in England, it is significant that Mr. Watkins, Mr. Nicholson, and Mr. Graham all have drawn poetic sustenance from distant and quiet places, and that they—together with Mr. Graves, who lives in Majorca—are writing the most forceful poetry at the moment); certainly nothing but sterile poems about poetry can spring from chattering about "movements" and "influences" over the clink of glasses at critics' flats, or in having one's works read and gone over at parties, or subjected to the cautiously severe ministrations of one's "peers." I would say rather that the distant places of the world, the young places, the growing places, are those which offer the greatest opportunity for individual and moving poetry to express itself and flourish; that there is more marginal poetry being written in the centres of culture than on the margins themselves.

A final point and an important one: Mr. Eliot's remark (quoted with approval by Mr. Wright) that a literature can only come to consciousness when a young writer is able to look back on several generations of writers behind him only serves to summarise the fallacy in all Mr. Wright's arguments: if the forebears had not stayed at home how could they have established a literature at all for their intellectual descendents to look back upon? Those who write in Australia, Canada, South Africa, or New Zealand in the teeth of such snobbery as Mr. Wright's may well draw comfort from that.

Charles Higham

Sydney, Australia

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Mr. Wright replies:

Most of Mr. Higham's letter would appear to answer itself. But perhaps I may point out that when I suggested those Commonwealth writers "who achieved anything worth truly serious consideration are almost without exception those who came to live in Europe," I was not referring, as Mr. Higham seems to think, to anything so naïve as the irrelevant and probably doubtful benefit of being "recognised." "Europe" as a geographical expression contains, or so I thought, more than the parochial boundaries of Chelsea and Bloomsbury: for instance, Portugal, where Mr. Roy Campbell now lives.

DAVID WRIGHT

London, W.C.

At the Tate Gallery

YOUR correspondent Mary Gerard italicises the following sentence in her quotation from Mme Giedion-Welcker: "Very often Giacometti withdraws his figures from possible intimacy by interposing a pedestal and raising them into a spatial and spiritual zone of unreality." Your correspondent thinks that "the conclusion to be drawn is . . . obvious." I agree, but differ as to the conclusion, which seems to me to be, not that the Tate is right in putting the *Pointing Man* on a high pedestal, but that, since Giacometti sometimes incorporates a pedestal into the work, he would have put the *Pointing Man* on one if he had wanted to lift it off the ground.

When I was organising the Arts Council's retrospective exhibition of Giacometti, I naturally discussed with him beforehand how the works ought to be shown. One of his principal concerns was that pedestals should be avoided as far as possible. The sculptures should be placed on the ground where this was practicable, and otherwise on tables—never on pedestals. I adhered to this as closely as I could. Naturally, the life-size *Pointing Man*, which the Tate Gallery kindly lent to the exhibition, was placed on the ground.

To do this at the Tate might risk damage to the work, not to say damage to visitors. This was why I said in my article that the sculpture should be "on or hardly above the ground." Ideally, of course, even a low pedestal ought to be avoided.

DAVID SYLVESTER

London, S.W.3

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BOOKS

Two Witty Women

One might argue from their writings that women are the less guilty and guilt-ridden sex. Anyway, women who write do write out of a more innocent, perhaps because limited, experience, than men. Certainly in these two books, by witty, intelligent, and travelled women, a male reader feels that in each case part of the charm is that the writer is only on the fringe of the guilt-ridden, promiscuous, café- and pub-crawling world of men.

With all her real understanding and sophistication, Miss McCarthy in Venice reminds me a bit of Daisy Miller in the Colosseum at Rome, remaining on the outside edge of so much fever and corruption. Her essay* is informed, bright, at times brilliant. It contains an enormous amount packed into a very short space, and if the publishers, so lavish in every other respect, had troubled to provide it with an index, it would be extremely useful. Each of Miss McCarthy's paragraphs is a portmanteau literally crammed with facts, names, lists, quotations. One makes a mental reservation to look back to something she has said about St. Mark's or the Doge's Palace and then, a few pages on, discovers one is in a kind of Hampton Court Maze of thick new leaves, and cannot find one's way back to the berries that delighted an hour ago.

It is difficult to say why this book is slightly disappointing. The reason, I think, is that, although she has looked at a great many things and has responded to them intently, sincerely, and with an independent judgment, her eye is not profoundly touched, it remains virginal. Often too—the Daisy Miller touch—the moral shock of Venice comes between her and the object observed. For instance: "The Venetians are enthusiastic restorers. The paintings of the Doge's Palace have been worked on by gangs of restorers ever since the eighteenth century. That is perhaps why, at least to my eyes, they look so verveless. . . ." She lists some exceptions to vervelessness, but one of them is not Tintoretto's *Mercury and the Three Graces*, illustrated, as it happens, in colour, on the page opposite this remark.

"St. Mark's as a whole, unless seen from a distance or at twilight, is not beautiful." Perhaps this is true, but it is the kind of observation that is not of real value unless one sees how many questions it raises, and is prepared to press them. The question of the "beauty" of St. Mark's, like that of the Taj Mahal, is irrelevant. The point about St. Mark's is that like the Taj, or like the entwined figures of the winds in Botticelli's Birth of Venus, or like the opening phrase of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, it creates an undisputed image which impresses itself unforgettably on the mind.

The difficulty is perhaps simply that of writing about painting, which one has to do with Venice. Miss McCarthy's great virtue is that she really works at things and forms her own judgment about them. This is always stimulating, but sometimes her brave brevity of comment cuts her off too short. "Canaletto and Guardi are the last, one might say, of the Venetian mirror-makers." It is more important, perhaps, to remember that Guardi is one of the first (in every sense) of modern painters.

Miss McCarthy is at her very best writing about the present-day Venice to which she responds warmly and immediately: her lodgings, her landlady, cats and gold-fish: a deeply ironic passage in which she compares (at the expense of E. V. Lucas) the reactions of Lucas in *A Wanderer in Venice* with those of André Maurel in his *Quinze Jours à Venise* to the pathetic lace workers of Burano, is the most moving passage in the book. *Venice Observed* is wonderfully illustrated and produced. My criticisms here do not prevent my recording that this is a delightful volume to possess: beautiful in itself, stimulating, and leading in a great many directions, not only to Venice, but to other books about Venice.

Miss Macaulay, like Miss McCarthy, combines remarkable sophistication with remarkable innocence. Nevertheless, *The Towers of Trebizond** is a song of experience, a remark-

* *Venice Observed*. By Mary McCarthy. Zwemmer. £4 10s.

* *The Towers of Trebizond*. By Rose Macaulay. Collins. 13s. 6d.

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able interweaving of happiness with sadness, encyclopædic knowledge with wisdom.

So much has been written about this book already that I need not attempt more than to add what I consider to be a few impressions. Reviewers have been puzzled to discover a genre in which to place Miss Macaulay's novel. Is this account of a group of eccentrics who set out with a camel to explore the possibilities of a proposed Anglican mission to Turkey a picaresque novel, or is it after all a romance with a (perhaps unsuccessful) tragic ending?

Myself, I think it is one of those curious works that does not fit into a category. I would describe it as an essay on life, sin, happiness, travel, and knowledge, illustrated partly out of the author's fantastic invention, and more deeply out of her own experience.

Some readers have been diverted by the satire on bishops, Anglicans, etc., into thinking it was an attack on the Church. This is, of course, quite wrong. What should be added to my account of it as an essay, is that *The Towers of Trebizond* has some elements of a religious tract. It is a tract not for logicians nor for reformers but for those who wish to embrace a secret: "It's no good your asking me anything. I haven't got the answers. Go and ask the Bishop. Actually, I'm pretty sleepy. But you've left out most of it. You should read some of the liturgies and missals. Especially the Greek. Sophia, divine wisdom, *O Sapientia, fortiter sauviterque diponens omnia, veni ad docendum nos.* And light. *O Oriens, splendor lucis aeternae et sol justitiae, veni et illumina sedentes in tenebris et umbra mortis.*"

Happiness will keep breaking in, is Miss Macaulay's view of life, evidently the reward of her immensely courageous and sustained innocence. Her philosophy of travel is, simply, that every day you see something new and you learn something which becomes part of your happiness. This might seem naïve were it not accompanied by such personal sophistication, and such formidable knowledge. Like the later poetry of Yeats, Miss Macaulay's book does make one reflect that it is quite possible, and, indeed, very prudent, to be happy, and that for those whom fate does not condemn to real suffering, unhappiness is an exercise in self-pity.

Where Miss Macaulay's book seems odd today is that she does not believe much in examining deep-rooted psychological causes. Such applied introspection gets in the way of seeing things and people, and reading books, she seems to feel. Sin is not so much to her an interior characteristic as an external rock on which one founders (though, of course, one has a tendency to this kind of ship-wreck). Thus the adultery which forms so much a theme of this novel has its own kind of sunlit innocence, the death of Vere, with

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whom it is committed, is purely accidental, and it is only after this death that the heroine discovers why the adultery was sinful. It is as though sin is a trick lost in a game played (perhaps in all innocence) with God. But she also learns that God was right and she was wrong.

The style in which Miss Macaulay's heroine records her impressions is perhaps a bit too simple-minded. This may put off readers with a fastidiousness that does not see beyond the fastidious. I think that this curious, fresh, happy book, so lovable in its faith that life can still be enjoyed and even be made into a potent good, will be read by many people for whom it will come as an intimate discovery, for many years to come.

Stephen Spender

THE MAGGOT AND THE CHINAMAN

"Y'see, when the Chinese want to prepare a very rare dish they bury a fish in a tin box. Presently all the lil' maggots peep out and start to eat. Presently no fish. Only maggots.... Well, when they've finished the fish, Chris, they start on each other."

"Cheerful thought, old man."

"The little ones eat the tiny ones. The middle-sized ones eat the little ones. The big ones the middle-sized ones. Then the big ones eat each other. Then there are two and then one and where there was a fish there is now one huge, successful maggot. Rare dish.... 'N when there's only one maggot left the Chinese dig it up——"

"Snap out of it, Pete. How the hell do the Chinese know when to dig it up?"

"They know. They got X-ray eyes. Have you ever heard a spade knocking on the side of a tin box, Chris? Boom! Boom! Just like thunder."

"CHRIS" is Christopher Martin, *alias* Pincher Martin,* temporary Lieutenant, R.N.V.R., peace-time juvenile lead in second-rate repertory. Also, a second-rate man. In military and naval circles *Pincher* attaches itself to Martin as inevitably as *Dusty* does to Miller, *Nobby* to Clark: but the nickname could not be happier; Martin is the essential grabber, of parts, scenes, main chances, and especially of other men's wives. In fact, a very successful maggot: but his ship is torpedoed, he finds himself washed up on a nasty, naked, North Atlantic rock (presumably, Rockall), and hears the Chinaman's spade beginning to knock.

Mr. Golding has wished to write what must inevitably be called a new Robinson Crusoe, but one in which individual solitary man is stripped to a much starker nakedness than was Defoe's desire or intention. This is true in the physical sense: Martin has no purling streams or groves of coconuts, only a gale-lashed half-acre of mussel, anemone, seaweed, and granite. Without rescue, he cannot survive more than a few days at most. It is also true in the moral sense: Crusoe possessed a personally interested God beneath whose ever-watching eye he moved about his daily tasks of carpentry or fishing, and to whom he turned to pray at night. Death, he trusted, if it were to come, would bring him into his God's presence. But Martin has no creed beyond that of the necessity of self-preservation, and the death he fights is only a Chinese darkness, an ultimate snuffing-out. Stripped of all human comfort or contact, he is reduced to the will-to-survive and to the intelligence that serves that will—the intelligence that is also the only thing that separates him from the lower animal and vegetable life he shares his rock with. The material this intelligence has to work with is fantastically limited and impoverished, a few shells, weeds, and stones; but part of the interest and excitement of *Pincher Martin* lies in watching how ingeniously the castaway deploys these petty resources. Martin is not at all a nice man, but he is a brave and clever one, and if these qualities were sufficient would deserve not to perish.

Tour-de-force is another word difficult to avoid in discussion of this book. Mr. Golding has evidently been fascinated by the magnitude of the technical problems he has set himself: how to keep up suspense, "dynamic," with a cast of one and no change of scenery. I am put in mind, on all sorts of occasions, of the first sentence that reverberated from the hollow confines of *The Unquiet Grave*: "The more books we read, the sooner we perceive that the only function of a writer is to produce a masterpiece." It is a hard saying, perhaps too hard, for it excludes the unmasterly but nevertheless entertaining writer, who has surely fulfilled a function even if in spite of himself; but I think a just one. A criterion at the very highest level, it is obviously only the rare and outstanding writer who deserves the compliment of being judged by

* *Pincher Martin*. By WILLIAM GOLDING. Faber. 15s.

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it. Mr. Golding is such a writer, and I find myself wondering whether he does not, on page 1, propose to himself the creation of a tour-de-force rather than of a masterpiece, with all the differences of approach that the two terms imply. But surrounded as we are by so many rabbits of literature nibbling the lettuces of life; and by the endproducts of their nibbling—

Life, passed through them, no longer is the same:
As meat, digested, takes a different name—

we are not to be ungrateful for the tour-de-force. And certainly this both beautiful and nightmarish story, with its endless wash of salt water, hallucinatory surge, will take a lot of forgetting. Only I would beg Mr. Golding to excise his final sentence in future editions: it cheapens the book and belies its finest values. Besides, that precise particular trick has already been pulled by O. Henry long ago.

SUPERFICIALLY very different from *Pincher Martin*, Sr. Alejo Carpentier's *The Lost Steps** has certain essentials in common with it—though I would say that the author is certainly in pursuit of the masterpiece rather than the tour-de-force. The hero is a composer who has made some pretty pickings, but lost his real creativeness, in the film-music racket; he lives in some unnamed great city of the United States, and its futility, corruption, and materialism are destroying him. A sudden chance sends him to the headwaters of the Orinoco in search of primitive musical instruments. He discards his smarty-party mistress, Mouche, who has tagged along for the lark, takes a native mistress in her place, and is gradually absorbed into the great natural cycle of the jungle—which is described in passages that are superbly moving and evocative. Like Pincher Martin, he is submitted to successive strippings-off of the onion-skins of civilisation; but whereas Mr. Golding sees essential man as a pair of claws gripping a naked rock, Sr. Carpentier (surely with deeper sanity) sees him as part of nature, living as he can and dying when he must, but at any rate most truly himself when he is closest identified with her, mindlessly cruel as well as beautiful as she may be. In the jungle village, the hero's inspiration returns. But he is desperately short of paper. Suddenly the world of the city erupts upon him again, in the shape of an aeroplane sent by his posturing publicity-seeking wife to "rescue" him. He yields to momentary temptation and flies back, intending to return at once with adequate supplies of ink, paper, and whatever else the jungle cannot provide for him. This return is brilliantly managed by the author: the contrast between the "noble" savage virtues and the venalities of organised society is so strongly felt, and conveyed, that argument or protest seems useless. Finally, the hero returns only to find the gates of his retreat shut against him.

The Lost Steps has provoked extremes of critical, or pseudo-critical, comment. Dame Edith Sitwell and Mr. J. B. Priestley have welcomed it rapturously: the critic of the *Times Literary Supplement* found it distinguished for "thundering tedium." My own opinion, for what it is worth, is firmly with Dame Edith and Mr. Priestley. It is one of the very few contemporary novels that I am ever going to read again. Its hostile commentators accuse it of naïvety and turgidity. Naïve it certainly is not. It is *simple*, which is an entirely different thing; and it is simple because it is sane. Sr. Carpentier criticises our Western world not from a "provincial" or "urban" or "moral" or "philosophical" viewpoint but from one that seems to me best characterised as simply "human," in the widest and best sense of that word. As for "turgidity," a certain bravura and, what would be considered in Printing House Square circles, overwriting cannot be denied—any more than it can be denied that I am probably the first reviewer ever to have squared the circle. But it must be remembered that Sr. Carpentier is a Latin, and a Central American Latin at that, and that one man's turgidity is another man's delicate restraint. A lot of reviewers would be a good deal less *frigid* if only they would learn to relax.

BUT what has the jungle itself to say? M. Camara Laye, whose childhood autobiography, *The Dark Child*, made a considerable impression last year, was born in 1924 in a Malinke village in French West Africa, though he has now transferred himself by way of mission school and technical college to Paris. His first novel, *The Radiance of the King*,* is also partly a discussion of Western man's need to rediscover some of the virtues he has left behind him, though it is an allegory of the search for God as well. The hero, Clarence, a white man, is rejected by his own kind as a no-good who cannot settle his gambling debts or hotel bill, but accepted by the blacks once he has learned humility. He desires to serve the black King of Kings, and the body of the book is concerned with his efforts to find and be presented to him. *The Radiance of the King* is episodic, fantastic, and symbolic in the way that Mr. Amos Tutuola has taught us to expect of the African writer—

* *The Lost Steps*. By ALEJO CARPENTIER. Gollancz. 15s.

* *The Radiance of the King*. By CAMARA LAYE. Collins. 13s. 6d.

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whose concept of narrative evidently approximates fairly closely to that of Homer. But the mention of Tutuola immediately suggests a crowd of significant differences. Mr. Tutuola has refused to become a *déraciné*, he sits in his village and spins tall, totally-African tales in a wonderful pidgin: M. Laye presumably writes impeccable French (Mr. Kirkup's translation is so transparent and idiomatic that it does not read like a translation, in any bad sense, at all) —and he has obviously read Kafka. His is a more complex, and perhaps a more typical problem for the educated African, than Mr. Tutuola's; but that does not prevent *The Radiance of the King* from being a most readable and subtle piece of fiction in its own right, as well as a valid expression of the interaction of African and European cultures.

AFTER months of near-drought, there is now a spate of really good fiction, and I wish I had the space to discuss some other books at the same length as these. But as it is, I can do no more than recommend:

The Loving Eye. By WILLIAM SANSOM (Hogarth. 13s. 6d.). A pleasantly sentimental novelette, full of wish-fulfilment, in the author's very best manner. As pleasant to read as I hope it was to write.

The Valley, The City, The Village. By GLYN JONES (Dent. 15s.). Standard Welsh issue; "ideal autobiography" of the bright lad from Ystrad. But distinguished from the run of the rarebit mill by the quality of its writing and the delicacy of its outlook, and also (if one may say so) by its *genuine* Welshness.

The Sacrifice. By ADÈLE WISEMAN (Gollancz. 15s.). I did not care myself for the fetidly Hebraic atmosphere of this chronicle; the creeds and prejudices of older-generation East European Jewry, here extravagantly praised (whatever is, is right), seem to me, however sincerely held, peculiarly unattractive. But perhaps this is only my own uncharity. Other critics, including Dr. David Daiches, have praised it highly.

Hilary Corke

A CHURCH OF COMPROMISE

OF ALL the institutions created by the English empirical temperament the Church of England may be said to have proved the least successful. Despite a certain contemporary intellectual adherence, whether of the Eliot, the Auden, or the Betjeman flavour; despite a certain upper-middle-class return to Church attendance as a defence against post-war social change; despite the periodic, somewhat nauseating, religious exhortations of the popular press; the Church of England remains, I should imagine, in a steady decline. English dislike of the doctrinaire and dogmatic, English love of *ad hoc* organisation and of compromise has reason to boast—however tedious the boast may become—of Parliament, Common Law, and the Civil Service; religious convictions have proved less susceptible to such an approach. After the lost battle of the 19th century, the Church of England decided to strengthen herself by the acceptance of scientific knowledge; the acceptance, in fact, has tended to undermine rather than justify her position. It would not be surprising if this anxiety to incorporate science produced another boomerang. It is tempting to the Church to take the "science" of parapsychology to its bosom; if she does so, she may find that she has handed over the very source of personal mysticism to science. Paradoxically, in the one sphere in which the Church of England has refused compromise, she has probably also done so to her own loss. Towards mystics, inspirationists, and prophets the English Church has in general been unbending, although like Wesley they have so often insisted on their devotion. The Roman Church has usually known how to include or to discipline her visionaries; the English Church lacks power to discipline, she has been unwilling to include. It would be shallow to attribute this to the social flavour of the Church of England, nevertheless English visionaries have tended to come from the lower middle-classes. It is perhaps impossible for a church of compromise to compromise far with the uncompromising.

Nevertheless Mr. Balleine's fascinating study of Joanna Southcott* and the stream of prophets and cranks who have continued her teaching down to the present time is, as he clearly sees himself, an indictment of the Church's religious comprehension. There are many aspects of the story, which he tells both wittily and sympathetically, that will interest the psychologist, the social historian, and the student of biblical prophecy, but the chief aspect that would, I should imagine, strike a Christian is the sad waste of religious devotion,

* *Past Finding Out.* By G. K. BALLEINE. S.P.C.K. 15s. 6d.

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courage, and enterprise for lack of sympathetic guidance. Most of the subjects of *Past Finding Out*, from Joanna Southcott to her successors today in the Panacea Society at Bedford, who describe themselves as C. of E. plus, pathetically avowed their devotion to the Church of England. It is this that Mr. Balleine presumably implies by his sub-title, "the tragic story of Joanna Southcott and her successors."

What emerges most strongly from this study of religious cranks is how little interest now attaches to medical or medico-psychological explanations of their behaviour. The lessons of William James are now too well-learned to be more than a basic framework to the significance of these people. Richard Brothers, Joanna's contemporary, whose millenary preaching attracted even men of learning, was clearly a dissociated psychopath. Joanna herself was an acute hysteric; the miraculous pregnancy by which Shiloh (a Messiah based on a garbled Hebrew word in the Scriptures) was to come on earth was only an acute bowel distension. John Lowe, the hunchbacked woolcomber, who urged Kosher meat and circumcision on the righteous as the millennium approached, was a sexually unbalanced man with acute illusions of guilt. Similar descriptions might be found for many more. Ultimately, I think, these aspects of their characters are the least interesting either to readers who dismiss their particular claims to inspiration or those who deny all such personal inspiration.

It is possible to concentrate on the individuals —almost all of them superb English grotesques blended of comedy, pathos, and courage. Mr. Balleine excellently accords to their histories the right proportions of irony, compassion, and admiration. For a novelist this book is a rich mine.

More interesting, however, than the individual stories are the qualities which unite them all—frenzied prophets and devoted followers alike. They were all people at once of strong and of no faith. They could believe that on an exact day London would be consumed in the fires of wrath, on an exact day Antichrist would come, on an exact day the Shiloh would be born; and when their hopes were deceived they could transfer their belief and find natural explanations for doing so to a new millennium and a new bearer of the Messiah. What they could not believe was that the Scriptural prophecies had no concrete relation to the world they lived in, that God would leave his chosen without a sign, that the wicked who dwelt around them would go without punishment here and now. Most of them, though by no means all, especially in the very early 19th century, were very simple people—uneducated or more usually very imperfectly self-educated. Their imaginations did not easily go beyond the concrete. Then again, they were mainly respectable artisans or lower middle-class, though by no means all were poor. The lives of such people were and even are peculiarly empty, their virtues make them a very inadequate reward. Their need for the manifestation of Divine justice to make sense of their lives was an urgent one; the Church gave their apprehension of God's reality no confirmation in the concrete terms which the Bible promised; first the Dissenting bodies and now Wesleyanism had gone dead on them. The eccentric, colourful, and hysteric among them led the rest in that uninhibited extravagance of language and even of behaviour which seemed to them the whole difference between the world filled with God's revelation and the humdrum world of their domestic and labouring lives. They expected the Truth to be strange. When John Ward, the shoemaker, in the 1820's said, "I am Jesus Christ who was Satan" or when George Turner was commanded by God to marry a strumpet, it was useless to say that they were mad. "Commend me," wrote one of the followers, "to an idea that can turn people's heads. Heads do not become dizzy through standing on hassocks, but through stand-

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ing on the top of St. Paul's. When I am told 'This is a great idea,' I ask, 'Has it made anyone mad?' If not, it is not worth much."

Of course, there were the respectable quietists too. Families who passed faith in Joanna's prophecies down from generation to generation. The Panacea Society today is their lineal descendant in its Bedford quietitude. But it was only in 1885 that Jezreel died and his unfinished Temple still stands at Gillingham, built in cement with steel girders for it was to last throughout the thousand years of the millennium. Later still, in 1934, died Mabel Barltrop, called Octavia, for she was the eighth in descent from Joanna and was herself Shiloh. Around her and her followers hangs a strong modern odour of Christian Science and spiritualism and automatic writing. Nevertheless, she was the last to demand urgently of the bishops that they open Joanna's mysterious box and to her came the message "Thou art My Child, sown in the womb of Joanna, and caught up unto the Heavenly Places." The fire that the rosy-cheeked, smiling, Devon farmer's daughter, Joanna Southcott, first lit in 1792 now only smoulders in Bedford but it may yet blaze up once more across the land.

Angus Wilson

SOCIAL ACCOMPLISHMENT?

THE BBC fee for a play in verse is probably six times the amount that even a generous publisher can offer for a book of poems; and enough to enable a poet to live not too well for a period of months. If for no other reason, by the end of the next decade or so (should the BBC's Third Programme continue) a body of dramatic poetry of some note may be called, as it would not otherwise be, into existence. Its foundations are already accumulating (Mr. Laurie Lee's *Magellan*, and the late Dylan Thomas' swan song, could be mentioned) and the past twelve months have been inspissated by at least two notable exercises in radiopoetics: Mr. David Gascoyne's *Night Thoughts** and Mr. George Barker's morality, *The Seraphina*. The former has recently been published in a handsome format.

Yet what Mr. Gascoyne offers is not a verse play or a dramatic poem (for it has no action nor even characters) but what one might call a meditation for voices. The theme—which is also central to Mr. Gascoyne's poetry as a whole—is the spiritual condition of megapolitan man. Mr. Gascoyne indicates it in a quotation from Hölderlin on the flyleaf: "*But alas! our generation walks in night, dwells as in Hades, without the Divine. . . .*" and the subsequent poem, following Hölderlin's sentence, divides into three parts. The first section, "The Nightwatchers," contemplates that night in which our generation walks; the second, "Megalometropolitan Carnival," offers a nightmare's-eye-view of a contemporary city ("*dwells as in Hades*") satiric, frightening, and funny; while the last ("*without the Divine*"), entitled "Encounter with Silence," is an epilogue in prose and perhaps the most effective part of the poem. But that remark is not meant to imply a weakness in Mr. Gascoyne's versification. One of the best poets of what I had better call the post-Auden generation, Mr. Gascoyne has made for himself a quietly but insistently individual style, neither oppressively over-eccentric or pompous on the one hand nor boringly flaccid on the other. His long, loose, ably modulated lines neither assault the ear nor send it to sleep, but are flexible to the purposes he asks them to fulfil:

What can be done
For anyone, what can we do alone, alas, how can
The lonely people without power, who hardly know
How best to help neighbours they know, help those
Who surely would be neighbours like themselves, if they but knew
How to break through the silence and the noise and the great night
Of all that is unknown to us, that weighs down in between
One lonely human being and another? Who can hear
My thoughts, or know how my heart grieves, or feel
That I just like themselves long to believe
That lonely human beings love each other?

To this plain, sad diction (apropos of technique, one might notice that the eleven lines above contain no more than *four* adjectives) contrast the following passage from the "Megalometropolitan Carnival" section, with its easy humour, not-too-heavily-underlined wit, and rhythm geared to suggest the wheels of an underground train·

* *Night Thoughts*. By DAVID GASCOYNE. André Deutsch. 10s. 6d.

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(Narration One)
But don't linger too long for a rush-hour
approaches and here it's unwise
To risk getting caught by the tide of the throng
that flows through at its height.
Better make your way now to the flights of
steps all leading down
To the slow-moving staircases, up to the fast
escalators
Descending past columns of spiralling stairs to
the level where tubes
Have been bored for the feet to press through
from the foot of one flight

(Narration Two)
Of stepping-stones, on to the passages in, then
the passages out,
To the thoroughfares out of which more
escalators are moving, some more
Slowly, the others more quickly, first up and
then down, on and on,
On and off, up and up, down down down, go
on down, till at last
The wonderful system will crown the true
will to success with success
As the peace known at zero-hour's peak on the
heart of the rusher descends. . . .

The criticism to be made is that this long, loose line rather tends to encourage repetition and prolixity. It is the final section, "Encounter with Silence," in which a man taking a turn in his garden before going to bed communes with the night and the silence ("*Real Silence is the message spoken to us that we fear most of all to hear*") that is the most profound and successful part of the poem. Especially, perhaps, the long prose speech of the Solitary, who, "*overwhelmed with the total evidence that what is there must be*," defines our condition, and in the conclusion, where Mr. Gascoyne makes, as it is the poet's business to make, a perception and an affirmation:

> "*The primary division of the human family at night is that which sets those who are alone apart from those who are together. And yet all are alone, as the man realised earlier in the garden; and all those who are isolated in their solitude are really alone only because they do not actually realise the presence of other beings like themselves in the world.*"

THE *Selected Poems** of Mr. Lawrence Durrell, who is one of Mr. Gascoyne's contemporaries, appears an over-modestly slim volume; one wonders why we were not given a *Collected Poems* instead? But Mr. Durrell seems to dislike the more expansive and rhetorical examples of his earlier work: "The Death of General Uncebunke," for instance, finds no place. Yet when one compares Mr. Durrell's four volumes of poetry with the present selection, it is not easy to guess the principles guiding his choice from his own poems. "The Tree of Idleness," which furnished the title for his last book of verse and was, I thought, its finest lyric, is also absent; nor has he included the famous "Elegy on the Closing of the French Brothels" which, even if Mr. Durrell considers it below standard, was worth keeping for the line "*All the great brothels closed save Sacré Cœur!*"; and there are many short lyrics one could well wish he had not abandoned. But it is ungenerous as well as easy to criticise such a book of selections for what isn't in it. The best poems here are descriptive, nostalgic, and lyric —Mr. Durrell's forte—e.g. "Chanel," "Nemea," "On Ithaca Standing," "In Arcadia," and the Audenesque "Heloise and Abelard" (many of them anthology items already); and of the longer pieces, "On First Looking into Loeb's Horace," with its final stanza which, while it expresses a concept of the Latin poet that I find mostly irrelevant, is yet curiously moving and effective:

> *So perfect a disguise for one who had*
> *Exhausted death in art—yet who could guess*
> *You would discern the liar by a line,*
> *The suffering hidden under gentleness*
> *And add upon the flyleaf in your tall*
> *Clear hand: "Fat, human and unloved,*
> *And held from loving by a sort of wall,*
> *Laid down his books and lovers one by one,*
> *Indifference and success had crowned them all.*"

I wish, however, that I could react with more enthusiasm to more of Mr. Durrell's poetry than I in fact do. Often he writes exquisitely, and, notably in his lyrics, with a seductive command of technique, especially in his mastery of the "dying fall" and throw-away line; but it seems to me that the fastidious writer too often subjugates the poet; that too seldom, in describing a place or an emotion, does he in fact achieve a statement about it; that too rarely—so far as I am concerned—does one come across that inner gaiety which is the hallmark of what, *pace* a recent correspondent in ENCOUNTER, I call a Poem.

BY "inner gaiety" I hope I shall not be understood to mean light or humorous verse, which a number of reviewers appear to have decided, rather uneasily, is the category to

* *Selected Poems*. By LAWRENCE DURRELL. Faber and Faber. 10s. 6d.

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which Mr. Kingsley Amis's verse may be consigned. Though Mr. Amis, a product of the provincial-academic school, is a raging non-intellectual (he recently claimed never to have heard of Kierkegaard), I have to confess his humour eludes me almost as easily as I am depressed by his ponderosity; so I find it difficult to agree to this labelling. His humour, of which the epigram "A Poet's Epitaph" in his new book* furnishes a conveniently brief and perhaps not unfair example:

They call you "drunk with words"; but when we drink
And spew it up, we sluice it down the sink.
You should have stuck to spewing beer, not ink.

seldom appears to lift itself much above a level of schoolboy obviousness, and (another adolescent quality) is often orientated in a manner I find at once hearty, resentful, and ingrained with a simple-minded, rather apprehensively envious cynicism, around the operations of sex. It is a frame of mind Dylan Thomas gave perhaps the best picture of in some of his autobiographical short stories, notably in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*. But if Mr. Amis's verse is to be labelled, I would label it didactic, for he is at his best and happiest in the mood of the platitudinous imperative, e.g. the poem beginning:

That horse whose rider fears to jump will fall.
Riflemen miss if orders sound unsure;
They only are secure who seem secure;
Who lose their voice, lose all.

MR. G. S. Fraser† in an entertainingly and perhaps characteristically autobiographic preface to *Poetry Now*, his anthology of British poets since 1939, tells us how he and a friend "rapidly covered three sheets of foolscap with nearly two hundred names" of poets who had a claim to be represented (which reminds me of Isaac D'Israeli's description of a similar exercise in prodigious indiscrimination: "not so much a muster-roll of heroes as a table of population"). As, except for his war service in the Middle East, Mr. Fraser has been almost solely dedicated to editing, anthologising, broadcasting, criticising, lecturing on and writing about current verse for very nearly twenty years, this feat was probably not difficult; though one is surprised to find in his final (but still dropsical) roll of seventy-four an absence of once-trumpeted names, especially that of the poet whose mind he found more interesting than William Blake's (*vide* Mr. Fraser's introduction to *The White Horseman*, an anthology of "New Apocalypse" verse).

But if specimens of "New Apocalypse" verse tend to be absent from *Poetry Now* (not that I complain), Mr. Fraser accords the school his solemn attention in the preface, as he does to every succedent "group" or "movement" (since 1939 an apparently quinquennial occurrence), deploying over each a rumbling battery of critical scrutiny, analysis, and judgment. Nothing escapes: not even Mr. Fraser's unhappy "literary friends in their forties whose attitude to life has, probably, never fundamentally changed since they were undergraduates; they have been too busy keeping up with things"—a misfortune which, we are told, is one of the factors responsible for the failure of contemporary British achievement in poetry. This thesis Mr. Fraser proceeds to illustrate, as it were, with his anthology.

The question it attempts to answer, he tells us, is, "What, since 1939, in English poetry, has been *new*?" From my examination of the pattern of Mr. Fraser's selection it appears to me that in his quest of novelty he had forgotten to look for poetry. He has the depressing theory that "the writing of poems is perhaps becoming, as in Japan or China, a general social accomplishment of all educated and sensitive persons" which is perhaps another explanation for the preponderance of drawing-room verse in his pages. At any rate, among the epigoni the occasional poem (e.g. Mr. Gascoyne's "The Gravel-Pit Field") sticks out from the occasional verse like a sore thumb, as much at home there as a shark in a bowl of goldfish. Yet I would deny that the poetic achievement of the period was as tenuous as *Poetry Now* suggests. Had Mr. Fraser confined himself to fewer poets he might have found more poems. Elsewhere he has claimed that this anthology, "aimed at . . . the sort of man I talk to on Adult Education courses," is "a broad and representative picture of the poetry of the period . . . a document which future historians of English poetry since 1940 will need." Will they? The chief characteristics of the verse of the forties—its dionysianism, rhetoric, and romanticism (I do not claim that they were entirely admirable but that they were dominant)—are barely suggested in this collection. Most of all it is the mathematical injustice of allowing no poet more than a couple of pieces that distorts this perspective of the last fifteen years; apart from making it impossible to guess the real scope, range, or development of any individual writer, it leaves the unfortunate fellows on adult education courses too much at the mercy of the anthologist's angle of glance.

**A Case of Samples*. By KINGSLEY AMIS. Gollancz. 15s.

†*Poetry Now*. AN ANTHOLOGY EDITED BY G. S. FRASER. Faber and Faber. 15s.

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THAT the P.E.N. anthology, *New Poems 1956*,* a cross-section "of the Work in Progress of contemporary English poets" for a single year appears to be the livelier collection, seems significant; even allowing for the presence of poets chronologically inadmissible to *Poetry Now*—e.g. Messrs. Muir and Auden. But credit is due to the current editors of *New Poems*, who have not repeated the mistake made by some of their over-kindhearted predecessors by attempting to represent much of the gigantic yield of amateur (or social-accomplishment) poetry daily produced in these islands. From among the elder poets here represented there is an excellent specimen of Mr. W. H. Auden's later vein, as well as one of the sadder ballads of Mr. George Barker (and while on the subject of ballads, Mr. Dannie Abse's macabre essay, "The Trial," should be mentioned.) As for the very youngest contributors, the two last, Mr. Geoffrey Hill and Mr. Dom Moraes, appear to be among the most potentially interesting.

As a footnote, Faber and Faber are to be congratulated for bringing out in one volume* a new edition of Mrs. Helen Thomas's lucidly written and moving "As it Was" and "World Without End," which have the status already of a minor classic. Together they comprise the story of her life with Edward Thomas, whose death in 1917 cut short the full flowering of a late-found genius for poetry, one subtly different, and decidedly more considerable than most of his "Georgian" contemporaries possessed. Finally, Mr. Siegfried Sassoon's new book of verse, *Sequences*,† which has been made a recommendation of the Poetry Book Society, shows that Mr. Sassoon, grown a little older and a little sadder, still produces easy and polished verses and occasionally a dash of his old satiric fire.

* *New Poems 1956*. A P.E.N. ANTHOLOGY EDITED BY STEPHEN SPENDER, ELIZABETH JENNINGS, AND DANNIE ABSE. Michael Joseph. 12s. 6d.

* *As it Was and World Without End*. By HELEN THOMAS. Faber and Faber. 12s. 6d.

† *Sequences*. By SIEGFRIED SASSOON. Faber and Faber. 10s. 6d.

David Wright

THE ORDER OF BEAUTY

SIR Kenneth Clark is one of the greatest extractors of essence of our time, and one of the greatest vitalising forces. His is what Emerson called "the robust Aristotelian method... skilful to discriminate power from form, essence from accident... opening high roads into Nature."

I can think of no living writer who clears the vision of the reader more completely, so that the eyesight is no longer a tired, inherited appendage, but a source of life. There is no page in this book* that does not open fresh doors on to the imagination.

"The eye," he tells us, "always knows more than it sees"; and he proceeds to tell us what the eye sees.

Sir Kenneth is a writer in the same realm as that inhabited by the great virtuosos in music—he transmits to us the exact flow, the rhythmic line, the weight or lightness of the work in sculpture or painting of which he is writing.

The book has an extraordinary quality. Here is no division between art and life. The book increases our power of living, so that we cannot understand how we could ever have passed through dead moments. The language in which his astounding learning clothes its life is quintessential—is "comme l'électricité même du réel." It is also of great beauty, as when, speaking of Leonardo's "Leda" he says it has "a sort of tropical redundancy." Or as in the following passage: "Prehistoric images of women are of two kinds, the bulging statuettes from paleolithic caves, which emphasise the female attributes till they are little more than symbols of fertility, and the marble dolls of the Cyclades, in which already the unruly human form has undergone a geometrical discipline. Following Plato's example, we might call them Vegetable and Crystalline Venus... Botticelli's Venus, 'born of the crystalline sea of thought and its eternity,' has a piercing strain of sensuality. Rubens' Venus, a cornucopia of vegetable substance, still aspires to the idea."

His criticism of sculpture and of painting throws fresh light on the problems of all the arts (including that of poetry, although he does not deal with that specifically)—shows us the principal necessities of the arts.

Writing of Henry Moore, he says that he, "searching in stone for the ancient laws of its material and seeming to find there some of those elemental creatures of whose fossilised bones it is composed, yet gives to his constructions the same fundamental character which was invented by

* *The Nude*. By SIR KENNETH CLARK. John Murray. £3 3s.

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the sculptors of the Parthenon in the 5th century before Christ."

Does not Sir Kenneth give, here, one of the principal necessities in all the arts—that "happy union" of the discovery and the invention?

"The ancient laws of its material."... The laws of the material are now almost forgotten, for instance, among the minor versifiers who crowd the scene today. Not only is there the ideal of the low roof, but even words seem made of plastic—scarcely varying in surface and weight however, or for whatever use, they are employed. This is because the would-be creators are not rooted in their material, do not draw their life-force from their material. A fellow-worker of Rodin, when Rodin was a student, said to him: "Quand tu sculpteras désormais, ne vois jamais les formes en étendue, mais toujours en profondeur.... Ne considère jamais une surface que comme l'extrémité d'un volume."

"The nude," says Sir Kenneth, "takes the most purely rational concept of which mankind is capable, mathematical order, and makes it a delight to the senses." Elsewhere he says "The concept of the nude is linked with our most elementary notions of order and design." Thus he declares that according to Vitruvius, sacred edifices should have the proportion of a man—"man's body is a model of proportion because with arms or legs extended it fits into those 'perfect' geometrical forms, the square and the circle. It is impossible to exaggerate what this simple-looking proposition meant to the men of the Renaissance. To them it was far more than a convenient rule: it was the foundation of a whole philosophy. Taken with the musical scale of Pythagoras, it seemed to offer exactly that link between sensation and order, between an organic and a geometric basis of beauty which was (and perhaps remains) the philosopher's stone of aesthetics."

"Architecture," said Schopenhauer, "brings to greater distinctness some of those Ideas... such as gravity, cohesion, rigidity, hardness, those universal qualities of stone, those first, simplest, most inarticulate manifestations of Will, the bass notes of Nature."

These, however, are only the outer properties of stone. The grandeur of the form, its life, inherent in those properties—of these Schopenhauer did not speak. There is, in the beauty of these statues, no rigidity; one feels, in the statues themselves, and in Sir Kenneth's passages on the subject, the possibility of movement contained in utter stillness... the wave suspended in order to move with a greater strength and beauty. "Les belles filles," Sir Kenneth quotes Nicholas Poussin as writing on the 20th of March, 1642, "que vous aurez vues à Nîmes, ne vous auront, je m'assure, pas moins délecté l'esprit par la vue que les belles colonnes de la Maison Carrée, vu que celles-ci ne sont que de vieilles copies de celles-là."

On each page, we are made aware of the different necessities inherent in sculpture and in painting. "A statue," wrote Leonardo in his Notebooks, "is dependent on certain lights, namely those from above, while a picture carries its own light and shade with it everywhere. Light and shade are essential to sculpture. In this respect, the sculptor is helped by the nature of the relief, which produces them of its own accord; while the painter has to create them by his art in places where nature would normally do so."

The bloom on the words, as Sir Kenneth writes of the male and female nude, is like the bloom of light as it falls on marble and stone; it takes on the warmth of the colour in the paintings of which he writes, as when he says of Raphael's Three Graces at Chantilly, "These sweet round bodies are as sensuous as strawberries."

He writes as movingly of the aged—of Rembrandt's old women, in whom "ugliness, poverty, and other misfortunes of our physical life were not absurd, but inevitable, perhaps he might have said 'natural' and capable of receiving some radiance of the spirit because emptied of all pride."

And looking at the reproduction of Rembrandt's Old Woman Bathing Her Feet, we see and feel the pull of the earth, the pull of gravity, and think of the wonderful passage about gravity in Sir D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson's "On Growth and Form": "... gravity makes a difference to man's height, and no slight one, between the morning and the evening; it leaves its mark in sagging wrinkles, drooping mouth and hanging breasts; it is the indomitable force which defeats us in the end." And he adds the note, "Lou pestre, mèstre de tout (Le poids, maître de tout)...." (J. H. Fabre. Oubreto prouvençalo.)

What a delight it must have been to write this book.

The reproductions are wonderfully chosen, beautifully represented.

Edith Sitwell

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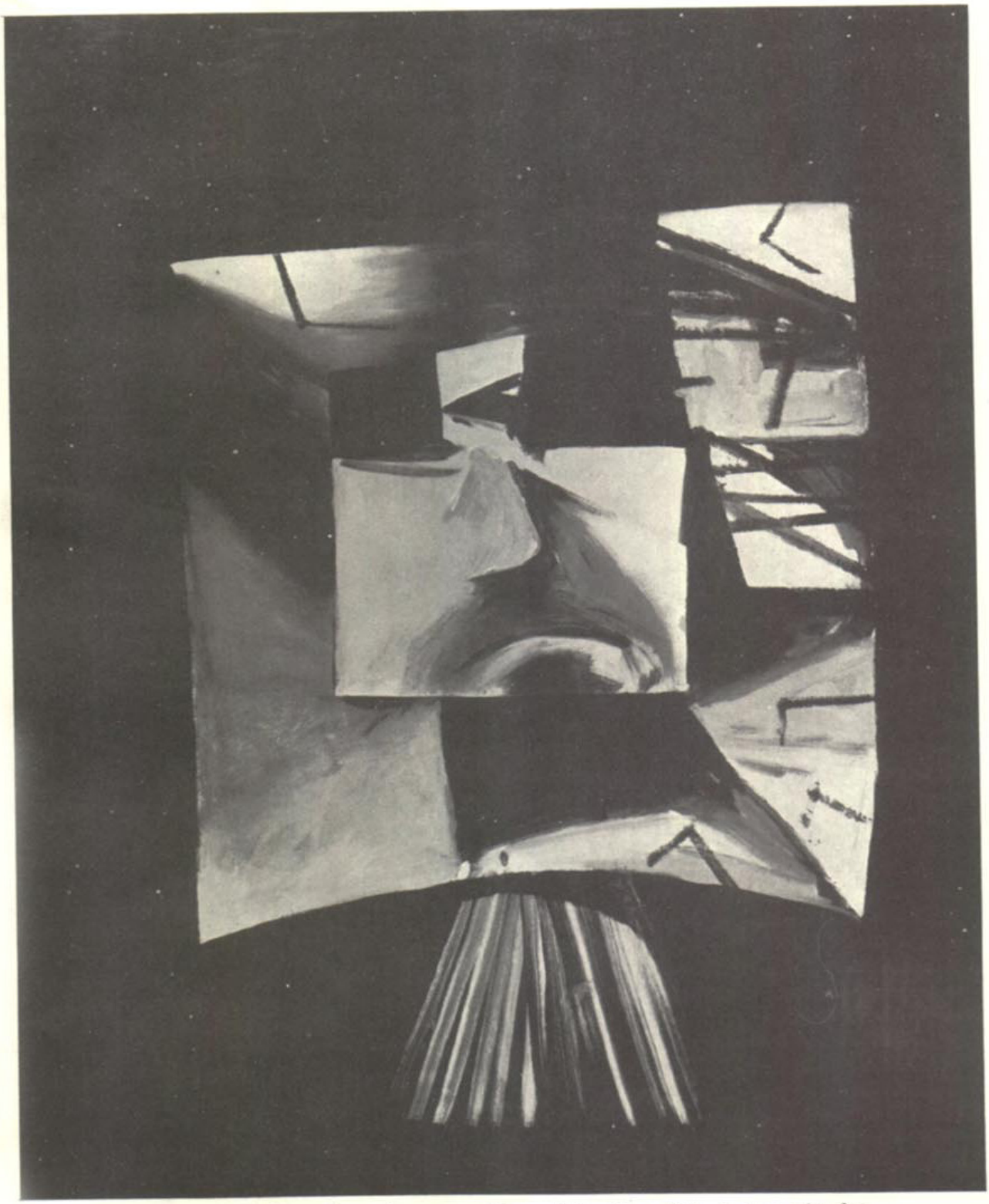

"All the people in the street could see of the driver of the tank was his face reflected in the driving mirror."

—*News item*

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ABOUT OUR AUTHORS

Kathryn Feuer and Wayland Young have sent us the following brief sketches of themselves:

MRS. FEUER: "I was born in 1926, began writing not long afterwards, have published short stories and a very adolescent novel (*Strike for the Heart*, Doubleday, 1947). I live in Burlington, Vermont, with my husband and nine-year-old daughter, and teach one Russian course at the University of Vermont. I began Russian studies about five years ago at Columbia; in the course of these I once read almost every Stalin Prize-winning novel and play and have lived to tell the tale—a very dreary one. Now I'm working, for a doctoral dissertation, on Tolstoy's manuscripts for *War and Peace*, which are just being issued. I visited the Soviet Union for a month this summer. Am longing to return to two things, Russia and fiction."

MR. YOUNG: "Wayland Young belongs to the generation which is coming to be known as that of the Genial Young Men. He was born in comfortable circumstances thirty-three years ago, educated at a public school and Cambridge, suffered nothing worse than hardship and funk in the World War, is happily married, and has three healthy children. He is not therefore so much interested in worrying about his own plight, which seems to him very tolerable, as in the plight of others in less happy circumstances. In this issue of ENCOUNTER he is worrying about the unborn.

"He worked for some time in the Foreign Office but found that he preferred posing his own problems to spending a lifetime writing minutes on the problems which arrived on his desk already posed. He has lived in Rome as correspondent of the *Observer* and has three times covered the Nationalist risings in French North Africa for the same paper. He has published two novels, a history of Italian socialism and, with his wife, a book on Old London Churches. At present he is finishing another novel. He intends in the future to keep on writing books about this and that, and novels, and plays. The only external frustration which gets him down is the cost of travel."

PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR. Age 41. Educated at Kings School, Canterbury. Travelled extensively in Europe, especially in the Balkans and Greece, also the Caribbean and Central America. Enlisted Irish Guards 1939. Served in "I" Corps in Greece, Albania, Crete (where organised resistance and commanded some guerrilla operations), Egypt, Italy, and Germany. Has published several books, including one on monastic life in France (*Time to Keep Silence*), one on the West Indies (*The Traveller's Tree*), and one novel (*The Violins of St.-Jacques*). He is now finishing a long book on Greece for John Murray.

ANN CHADWICK. Born in Toronto in 1921. Married and came to England in 1942. Has one son of thirteen. Her short stories have been published in various "little reviews." Now working on her second novel and is looking for a publisher for the first, which she recently finished.

ANTHONY WEST now lives in New York where he contributes regularly to the *New Yorker* and other magazines. . . . COLIN WELCH is "Peter Simple" of the *Daily Telegraph*. . . . CHARLES CAUSLEY's new book of poems, *Union Street*, will be published shortly by Rupert Hart-Davis.

LIONEL TRILLING has pointed out a couple of very odd typographical errors that crept into his essay on Santayana, in our December issue. On p. 33, "get in his *licks*" became "get in his kicks"; while on p. 37, "sweetness is an *endemic* trait of American life" became "sweetness is an academic trait"(!).

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